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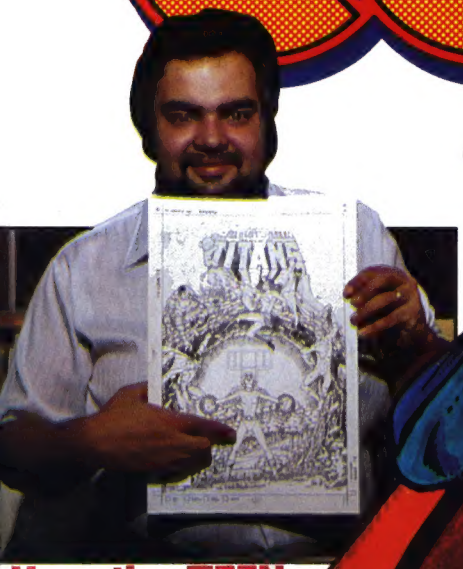

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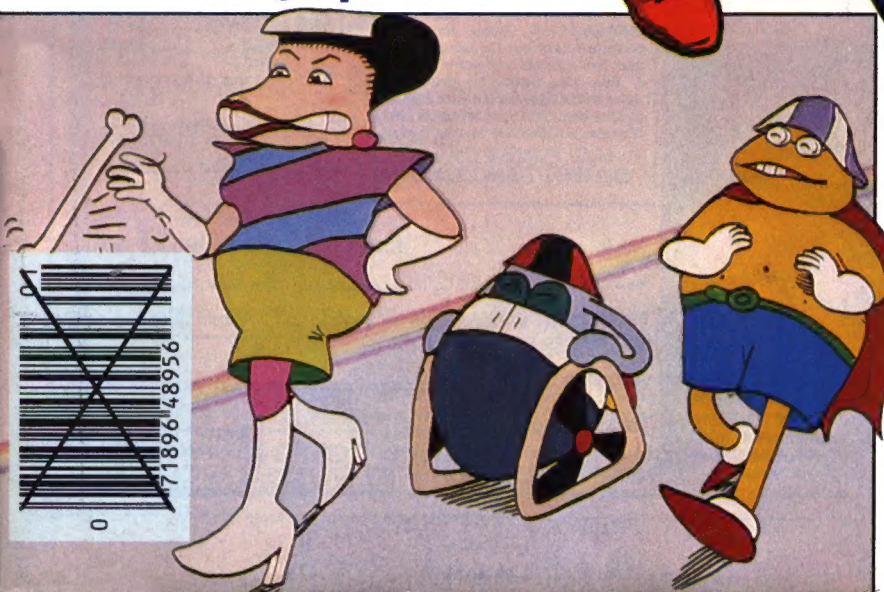

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COMICS Scene

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JANUARY

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ABOUT THE COVER: George Perez may be known for his work on the *New Teen Titans* but he can also draw a pretty mean Superman. Turn to page 56 for our chat with George and page 34 for a colorful look at his art. Superman® and © 1982 DC COMICS INC. *Eltquest* © 1982 WaRP GRAPHICS; *Quest at the Quackedero* © 1982 SALLY CRUIKSHANK.

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Word Balloons

Whenever one of our magazines reaches an anniversary, we always use it as a time for reflection, re-evaluation and celebration. The way we approach our anniversaries also differs—FANGORIA lets the time slide by with nary a mention while STARLOG goes all out with a double-sized issue crammed with goodies and features galore. With our first anniversary, we've assembled our strongest editorial line-up to date and have gone out of our way to celebrate the event.

But what has happened in the last year? Well, when this magazine was in the formulative stages, back in early 1981, Eclipse Enterprises was just getting their magazine underway and Pacific Comics was preparing to release their first two titles. Mike Gold was in Chicago assembling financing for First Comics and Marvel and DC were just beginning to cater to the Direct Sales market. Royalties at the majors didn't exist, nor did a newsstand magazine on the subject.

Today, Marvel has their Graphic Novels, Epic Comics and a handful of direct-only books; DC has plans for Graphic Novels, a line of Direct Only books on the way, has pioneered the royalty system and introduced the maxiseries; Eclipse has three regular comics plus the magazine; Pacific is expanding their titles and looking for new formats; First Comics and Red Circle Comics premiere this month and a score of small publishers are getting ready to introduce new titles.

Elfquest and *The Spirit* and *Little Nemo* are going to be turned into animated features; Jack Kirby's *Captain Victory* has been optioned for live action features; *The Hulk* has his own cartoon series and Columbia Pictures is developing both *Sheena* and the *Fantastic Four*. And we're all waiting to see *Superman III*.

Whew! It's been an explosive year for all of us. We seem to have gotten in just a step ahead of the explosion and now we're right in there reporting on what's happening with the best resources available.

I've come to realize that the potential for the direct sales system is the way of the future and will be applied to magazines beyond the comics-genre. Someday, maybe soon, you will find *Time, Cosmopolitan* and *Sports Illustrated* handled on a direct sales-only basis. Comics shops will continue to grow but we'll find bookstores adding graphic novels and other comics items.

Still, the next year will see more publications, from more publishers, than ever. Or so it seems. By next summer's conventions, there will be over a dozen new books, at least two or three more companies introduced and a gross of new things from the established publishers. It'll be a time for hard decisions among the readers since we can't afford to buy it *all*.

I'm afraid we'll see a shakeout, some of the smaller publishers will be hurt and some of the more marginal titles will be gone. There's a chance the handful of distributors may begin dictating the types of product produced, limiting the chance for exploration—the very reason the alternative presses started in the first place. The smaller, more amateur publications will be dropped in favor of more established talents which also may hurt the chances of untested writers and artists. We've all got to be careful not to allow this to happen.

The next year is going to be very exciting, interesting, heart-rending and busy. We'll be here to report on the goings-on. I sincerely hope you join us regularly.

* * *

Just a week and a half before this issue went to press, word reached us that Gene Day had died. Once the shock wore off, I immediately began assembling what coverage I could in the short amount of time left. Fortunately Doug Moench offered to write something in tribute of Gene's immense creativity and the people at DC and Marvel were also very helpful.

On a personal note, however, I want to say that although I never met Gene, I have admired his artwork for years, ever since his earliest work appeared in Mike Friedrich's *Star*Reach*. We had spoken on the phone only a few times but he was always friendly and brimming with enthusiasm for not only his work but this magazine. Just a week before his death he was telling me that he was extremely excited about drawing Batman, working once more with Moench, and was hoping that he could do the Shadow for Fantagraphics once their negotiations were finished. With that in mind, I was all the more saddened by his untimely death. I must agree with his fans, Gene was at the height of his abilities as he came off *Master of Kung Fu* and his future was bright. I'll miss you Gene; rest easy.

—Robert Greenberger

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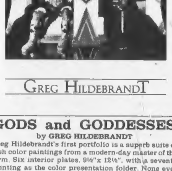

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Lettering

Boy, not a single note of congratulations on reaching this, our first anniversary. And the mail has trickled down to a small handful of letters. Don't you like what we're doing? Don't you care? Well, let's get on the stick and get to those typewriters or pens and rush those letters in the mail. You know where to find us:

Lettering
COMICS SCENE
475 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

Praise

Dear Bob and Howard,

. . . I think there must be something deep in your psyches that forces you to constantly outdo every other magazine on the market. As a long-time STARLOGGER, I'm happy to see you do a comics magazine. It's not only the only magazine I own every issue of, but is one of the more eagerly awaited.

Also, it is because of COMICS SCENE that I have begun reading comics again. terrible art (characters indiscernable from frame to frame!!) had scared me away from comics, but because of your coverage of *Swamp Thing* and *Night Force*, I'm very happy indeed to be reading them. Not to mention (but I will) introducing me to *Epic Illustrated* and *Heavy Metal*. Despite what many may believe, I think *Epic* far out does *HM*.

One of your readers (Mr. Harvey) claimed that he felt part of the industry after reading Comics Reporter. I agree emphatically. Your note about *Cerebus* was especially interesting. I made a quick note and sent it to an editorial cartoonist who works with my mother, his response: KOMIKS ARE VITAL.

Best of luck. Your magazine is great, and I look forward to watching—and reading—as it evolves.

John Zipperer
417 South 26 St.
Mahitowoc, WI 54220

Dear Howard & Bob,

. . . COMICS SCENE is a wonderful magazine. I really appreciate your complete coverage of the comics world. News of the majors and the minors, the news and the old, the above, middle and underground make COMICS SCENE live up to its name.

In the guest spot Denis Kitchen brings up an interesting point about comics shops. A lot of them carry only the mainstream material. This is great for keeping customers happy for 2 or 3 years, but eventually the stuff starts looking the same. That's when you start looking for some variety.

Maybe you'll start reading Fanzines, or undergrounds or newave or become interested in animation. If your shop stocks it, they'll keep your business. If not, maybe you'll drift away from comics entirely and never realize the full range of material available.

Change is a slow moving creature. So until the shops start carrying the full spectrum, at least people can learn about it through magazines like yours. And that is a step in the right direction.

Richard Krauss
4333 N.E. 29th
Portland, OR 97211

Dear Folks,

. . . I'm almost finished with COMICS SCENE #5 and I must say, you have found a niche in my regular reading pile. I was all set to hate COMICS SCENE since you folks were not a "fanzine" and I thought maybe your writers would write about comics more for money than love for the medium. And I thought you would just cover the fan favorites. I thought I would hate COMICS SCENE.

I was wrong.

Who cares if your writers write about comics for money? As long as they produce good, journalistic articles and interviews, why should I complain. In my 11 years in comics fandom, I don't remember reading a single article or interview with Jim Aparo as its focus. Aparo has been a favorite of mine for longer than I've been in fandom. Aparo is not a"fan favorite" so none of the fanzines I get ever did an interview with him.

Yep, kids, there's more out there than Frank Miller and X-ppeople.

Keating DuGarm
2031-6th St. N.W.
Minot, ND 58701

Influences

. . . Alan Brennert states in Focus (COMICS SCENE 5) that Sienkiewicz is only doing Neal Adams and John Byrne is only a synthesis of Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, Gil Kane and a few others.

We all have our influences, whether we are doing art, writing or working in a factory. These influences will show in our work. If we knew who Kirby, Kane and Ditko's influences were we would see where their styles came from. It was years before I found out that Al Williamson was heavily influenced by Alex Raymond. I thought he was born that way. Paul Gulacy was doing Steranko, who was doing Kirby, who was probably doing someone else. Artists have always been doing this, it is not a sin and it is not limited to comics. Raphael was a synthesis of Renaissance Masters and El Greco shows some resemblance to Titian.

Since these artists have done this and can still be called great, I think we can be humble enough to follow in their footsteps.

After reading Brennert's first Batman story in *Detective* 500, I thought, this is a reworking of a *Fantasy Island* script, but I still enjoyed it. There are similarities between Sienkiewicz and Adams, but there are also differences. We should savor those differences instead of harping on the supposed shortcomings.

Jack Bertram
3700 Parkview Ln 14A
Irvine CA, 92715

Who's the Greatest?

Dear COMICS SCENE,

. . . I did take exception to your cover billing of Burne Hogarth as "The World's Greatest Comics Artist." Admittedly, Mr. Zimmerman *does* credit Maurice Horn for this quote in the article further on in the issue; but the fact that the *cover copy* failed to indicate that it was "borrowed" irritated me somewhat. (Similarly, Marvel's *Fantastic Four* continually reiterating it being the "World's Greatest Comics Magazine" is a source of perpetual annoyance.)

Nat Karmichael
29 Simla Ave.
Geebung 4034
Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Dear Sirs,

. . . I have read your story on Mr. Burne Hogarth. I read it top to bottom and I enjoyed it immensely. It was a wonderful story on his career. Most of all his artwork is indeed magnificent.

He surely earns the nickname, "The World's Greatest Living Comics Artist."

Mike Ussery
R.R 1 Box 130 A
Armstrong, MO 65230

Hail Aparo!

This is to the Skeptics Among Your Reading Crowd:

. . . Usually when readers are asked to submit suggestions for topics and when readers are told that—even though they may not be printed—their letters are always read. Those readers seem to have doubts about the honesty of such statements, so they don't write in.

Well, I used to think like that, but now I know that the editors making such claims are usually telling the truth . . . at least those at COMICS SCENE.

In my very first letter to COMICS SCENE, I did not beg, plead or demand—but I simply requested that CS do a bio on Jim Ap-

aro. Sure enough, two issues later, there it was: everything you wanted to know about the man but never thought you'd see!

Chris Kmalaf
5126 Georgi Lane
Houston, TX 77092

Dear COMICS SCENE,

. . . Your article on Jim Aparo was excellent and finally gave the recognition he deserves. I loved his Spectre and Deadman.

C. Canuck
Goose Bay
Labrador, Canada

COMICS SCENE:

. . . I loved your interview with Jim Aparo, since Aparo has been my favorite artist for seven years when I first saw his work on the *Brave and the Bold*. These interviews give us a little more insight on the writers and artists. Because of this article, I now know what comics Aparo began with and how comics turn out the way they do. Thanks a lot.

T-T Markin
6705 Roosevelt Dr.
Sylvania, OH 43560

You're welcome. Jim Aparo's interview has proven to be one of our most popular features since we started a year ago. Most of you mentioned it when commenting on issue five and a tip of the hat to Jack C. Harris for doing such a fine job. Jack will be back in just a few short issues with a profile on Walt Simonson, another top-notch artist we all know little about.

It's Bob's Turn

Dear COMICS SCENE,

. . . I am sick and tired of everybody and their mothers shooting down Saturday-morning animation. In the September issue, both Mr. Greenberger and Mr. Zimmerman gave their back-handed opinions on the subject and now it's my turn!

First, I'd like to tell Don Bluth that he did not create animated cartoons. Hanna-Barbera were veterans in the business while Bluth was still in junior high school wondering how they made those funny pictures move.

Considering the restrictions they have to work with, they do very good work. Not all the restrictions are financial. The old Disney, Warner Bros., MGM and Walter Lantz cartoons were produced for a generalized theater audience. The elements of parody and satire run rampant in these cartoons. Even the prime time *Peanuts* cartoons are written for a broad audience. Saturday morning cartoons are aimed at a children's audience, primarily 7-12 years old.

There are other restrictions. About 1965, certain pressure groups decided there was too much violence on Saturday morning TV. The fast action and slapstick humor of an MGM, Warner or Walter Lantz cartoon was considered unhealthy for young impressionable minds. The groups came down on the networks, the networks came down on the animators. The result: dull and boring cartoons.

Despite these restrictions, Saturday-morning animators are producing the best possible programming they can.

I don't care if I'm in the minority about this. I grew up with Huck Hound, Pixie and Dixie, Bullwinkle and Yogi Bear. They influenced my decision to make cartooning my profession. I just feel that anyone who shoots down Saturday-morning animation is either ignorant or arrogant.

Robert Outlawe
425-B CullDeSac
West Point, MS 39773

No Fun Yet

Dear Howard & Roberto,

. . . Mentioning it in the office hasn't helped yet, so here's some reader mail. Two things very dear to my heart that you have not yet covered in any depth: computer technology as applied to animation, and Bill Griffith.

SOMETIMES, I THINK I SHOULD'VE STAYED DEAD/ I MEAN.. I DON'T MIND BEING THE SPIRIT.. BUT THESE MAIN TITLES ARE PAINFUL/OUCH!
BRIAN PEARCE
THE
APOLOGIES TO EISNER!
THE SPIRIT © 1982 WILL EISNER

Now, I'm not asking for more details on *TRON*, as fascinating as that fleshy stuff may be; I think your readers might be interested to know that computers are also being enlisted for Saturday morning animation—Hanna Barbera, that wonderful company that built an empire through low-cost, assembly line animation techniques, now has one of the largest facilities for computerized ink-and-paint in the world; the backgrounds used for the *Smurfs* series are almost entirely computer-generated. The Motion Picture Cartoonists Union is aware that this is only the beginning—that's one of the reasons they're talking about a strike action. Will computers improve Saturday morning, or make it even worse? What happens to the animators? Will there even be human animators in another 15 years? I doubt if anyone has the answers, but I'd like to see the people involved try to come up with them.

Then there's Griffy . . . where's Claude Funston, Mr. "The" Toad, and (but of course) M'sieur Zippy? I'm not having fun yet!!!

"Uncle Bob"
FANGORIA Magazine
The Room Down The Hall
New York, NY

Memories

Dear Editor,

. . . As the years have passed one question has come up time and time again; in newspapers, magazines, and other branches of the media, "Do comics books have any retaining value other than as an investment?" My answer to this question is "Yes!" My story will tell why:

The other day I paid a visit to one of our local comic specialty shops (Comic World). As I walked in I noticed that he had one wall covered with late 1950's and early 1960's DC comic books. As a child I kind of grew up on the early DC comics so, I went over and took a closer look. I saw various old *Green Lantern, Flash, Superboy, Showcase,* and *Batman* comics. As I looked over the *Batman* comics I saw one in particular that seemed to stand out above all the rest. The issue was *Batman* #143, "Bat-hound and the Creature." It was as though an alarm had gone off in my head. Then it came to me, this was the same comic that I had read more than 20 years ago on the night before I started the first grade. Seeing that comic was like having a reunion with an old pal.

I remembered back to that summer night in 1961. I was very nervous, after all first grade is a big step from playing with toy soldiers in the front yard. I guess my parents knew I was a little uneasy, so they took me to the supermarket and bought me some comics. The reason *Batman* #143 stood out was because it was a sad tale of an alien that came to earth and was befriended by Bat-hound. Needless to say the alien gave its life helping Batman and Robin capture "Lippy" Yates and his gang. The last two panels on page eight were what really stuck in my mind after all these years. Now after 21 years it still had as much impact as it did in 1961. I now own that comic again even though I do not make a habit of paying more than $5.00 for a comic. (It was in mint condition.) In the long run the book was worth it (at least to me).

So, in answer to the question "Do comics have any retaining value other than as an investment?" "Yes!" Comic books are a time capsule of emotions and a certain time in a person's life that can bring back wonderful memories with each turn of the page.

Stephen Scott Beau Smith
110 Lewis Ave Apt. #7
Barboursville, W V 25504

Questions

Dear Sirs:

. . . A feature on Reiji Matsumoto would be greatly appreciated. Matsumoto is the phenomenally prolific artist/creator of *Galaxy Express 999, Space Pirate Captain Harlock* and *Queen Millenia*. He is perhaps best known in the United States for his *Space Cruiser Yamato* series of serials and films, some of which are shown here under the title *Star Blazers.*

Michael Kanterovich
59 Jewett Lane
PO Box 51
Hollis, NH 03049

Funny you should ask. Just the other weekend, Bob Greenberger was confronting the Star Blazers *fan club at a Creation convention and after hearing about the third season of episodes being translated into english and the final movie,* The Final Yamato, *in the works, he agreed that something should be done on this popular series. We'll swing back to Japan after our Around the World feature stops in France and Italy.*

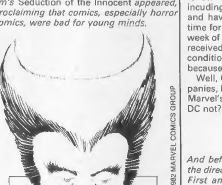
Dear COMICS SCENE,

. . . *Love* your magazine. I especially enjoy Loose Cruse and Creating the Comics. I have a couple of requests: one, could you do a series on how animation is done? And two, I have always seen the little stamp saying "Approved by the Comics Code Authority" could you define what the code is—and what is required to get approved.

Andy Wolber
1660 Chapel Road
Parma, MI 49269

First, our sister publications STARLOG and CINEMAGIC have done features on exactly how animation is done so you may want to check for back issues. As for doing such a piece ourselves, once we have some room (you know, like late next year) we can try and do a comprehensive report.

As for the Comics Code—they were created as a self-regulating organization in the early 1950s when Congress was holding hearings to determine the extent that comics, movies, television and radio played in forming juvenile delinquents. This was also the time Dr. Fredric Wertham's Seduction of the Innocent *appeared, proclaiming that comics, especially horror comics, were bad for young minds.*


The other day some wiseguy said I looked like Bozo the Clown. He laughed for three seconds. I recall.
WOLVERINE © 1982 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

Today, the code has relaxed a lot of its restrictions and is constantly being updated to conform with today's society. The code dictates the extent of violence, the types of crimes, the amount of undress allowed in the comic stories themselves. They also dictate what can and cannot be advertised. Only newsstand comics are required to have the seal which is why your direct-only comics like Camelot 3000 *and* Moon Knight *do not have the code seal.*

Dear COMICS SCENE:

. . . I have just finished reading COMICS SCENE # 5 and found a problem. In the article, "Panels and Frames," you stated that there was a comic based on the movie *Alien.* When was this comic or magazine published?

Harry Southmayd
Box 532 Cascade Road
Lake Placid, NY 12946

The Graphic Novel was published in 1979 by Heavy Metal. *The story was adapted by Archie Goodwin and Walt Simonson and is hailed as one of the better adaptions in recent memory.* Heavy Metal *still sells copies through their mail order operation.*

Answering "Gripes"

We received a number of letters in response to the letters run in issue five. Marshall Dakin complained that subscriptions from Marvel and DC were worthless because of the condition the comics arrive in and the direct-sales approach doesn't work without a local comics shop. Craig M. Connelly complained that Marvel's prices were prohibitive. The following letters best sum up the response we received.

Dear Howard and Bob,

. . . For one thing Marshall, who says you have to buy a subscription to *Micronauts* and *Moon Knight?* Haven't you heard about subscription services? I'm a member of the Heroes World Discount Club and I follow the same direct sales books you do, incuding some 17 other monthly comics, and have not once 1) had to wait a long time for my comics (always within the first week of the month) or 2) had them sent and received in anything less than pristine mint condition. Why condemn a new approach because of a few bad experiences?

Well, Craig, take a look at the other companies, DC's prices are exactly the same as Marvel's! Why is Marvel in the wrong and DC not?

Richard Brown
RFD 2
Exeter, NH 03833

And before we go on, let's point out that the direct-only comics from Pacific, Eclipse, First and Red Circle give you the same package without ads, on slightly better paper and charge one dollar. Marvel's Epic Comics are the same size, on white baxter paper, have no ads and charge $1.50 (compared with the same package with ads for one dollar which DC is using now).

Dear COMICS SCENE,

. . . I have a subscription with Marvel for two years and have only had one or two *minor* problems. I would also like to point out that Marvel's prices didn't raise until after DC's did.

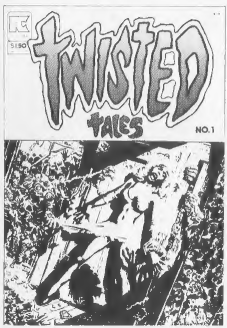
Chris Dyer
3493 Columbus Rd. NE
Canton, OH 44705

Erratum

Last issue's color page by Fred Hembeck neglected to include any of the necessary copyright information. For completists and legal folk, here we go: Thunderbolt, Dr. Mid-Night, Sun Boy, Eclipso, Brainiac 5, Kid Eternity, Deadman and Cain are all ©1982 DC Comics Inc.; Thunderbolt (Cannon), Mr. A. © 1982 Charlton Comics; Daredevil (blue/red) ©1982 Charles Biro, Daredevil, Moon Knight, Impossible Man, Two-Gun Kid, Professor X and Nova ©1982 Marvel Comics Group; Dr. Solar ©1982 Western Publishing; The Spirit © 1982 Will Eisner; E-Man and Nova © 1982 Joe Staton and Nicola Cuti.

TWO BLOCKBUSTER COMIC RELEASES

PACIFIC COMICS CONTINUES TO LEAD THE WAY



Late November marks the debut of "TWISTED TALES", an all-new horror comic printed in full-color on high-quality white "Baxter" paper. This book will feature an ever-changing line-up of the top artists in comics illustrating masterpieces of the macabre written by Bruce Jones. The first issue of this bi-monthly, 32 page book features a cover and lead story by Richard Corben. Tim Conrad, Alfredo Alcala and Brett Blevins all contribute superior work. Subscribe today and don't miss an issue of this groundbreaking release.

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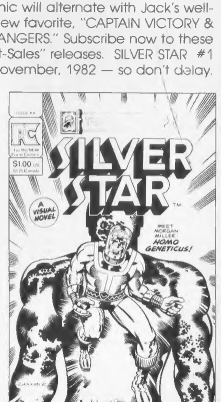


Comics Reporter

PEOPLE

Moench Goes Freelance

Prior to Gene Day's death, Doug Moench and Day had left Marvel to pursue freelance careers including several collaborations intended for DC Comics.

The reasons behind their move were motivated by disagreements with Marvel editor-in-chief Jim Shooter.

Moench explained that he left as a result of Shooter's plans to totally change the direction of *Master of Kung-Fu*, a title Moench has been steadily writing for 10 years. "I was told that sales were puddling along for a long time," Moench told us. "He wanted drastic sweeping changes." Shooter, Moench said, told him to kill off the supporting characters and remove Fu Manchu from the storyline, allowing Shang Chi to become the villain. A ninja would then be introduced as the new Master of Kung Fu.

"Shooter's attitude was, 'Maybe you could create the kind of feature' (the phrase wholesale slaughter was used) 'without killing off all the characters . . . but I doubt it.' His further attitude was, 'If Moench can't do this to my satisfaction, then get somebody else who can.'"

Reached at his office at Marvel, Shooter explained, "It's my business to see that we're doing as well as we can. I go up and down the line to see the books." Remarking that all Marvel's books were doing well, Shooter is shifting his concerns to the poorer sellers or books without distinct editorial vision. Although Moench and Day were happy with *MoKF*, editor Ralph Macchio, Shooter said, and he were displeased with the book's direction.

"If I get the feeling from the editor that they're not happy and we don't know what to do, that opens the discussion," Shooter said.

While Marvel hasn't acknowledged it, several freelancers and staffers report the existence of a "Bang List," or "Bang Program," in which Shooter will work with the editors to improve the bottom-of-the-line sellers such as *MoKF, Thor* and *The Defenders*.

According to Shooter Moench refused to make any changes on MoKF so he opted to leave the book. "When I was talking about wholesale slaughter," Shooter said, "I was having trouble making myself clear to Doug. I said, 'I'm trying to tell you there are no limits, the sky's the limit. Get rid of them all, keep them all. . . I don't care, just do something different." Finally, after several discussions, Moench walked off the book and than chose to leave Marvel entirely. "I think Doug, fundamentally, liked what he was doing already and wanted to stay with it and I think *that* was the problem."

Moench left behind *King Conan, Moon Knight* and *Thor* (a title Moench claims he was never allowed to write the way he wanted to). When he tendered notice on *MK*, Bill Sienkiewicz chose to leave also. The move was something Sienkiewicz had been considering anyway and rather than work with new writers, he wanted to make a clean break to *MoKF* editor Ralph Macchio said in September, "Jim had an idea that he wanted to make some changes in some of the books with *Kung-Fu* and *Spider-Woman* being the first two. Jim wanted to make changes and as the editor it was my job to carry them through."

Alan Zelenetz will be the new scripter on *MoKF* and *Thor* while a number of writers are doing *Moon Knight* fill-ins. No permanent artist has been found for either *Indiana Jones* or *MoKF*.

Moench will take over *Batman* (with #360), *Detective Comics* (#527) and *World's Finest Comics* (#280). He will also be doing several issues of *Arion*, beginning with number four this month. Moench is developing several new concepts, many of them for DC, one for Eclipse and one to be represented by Mike Freidrich.

RED CIRCLE COMICS

Mighty Crusaders Return to Active Duty

The Mighty Crusaders, a revival of the 1960s superhero group published by Archie Comics, is scheduled to hit the distribution sales market in December as a 32-page full-color $1 bi-monthly comic book on the Mando paper stock.

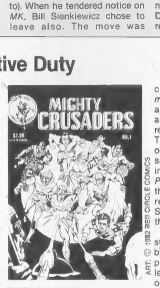
The two version of the Shield, the Fly, Fly Girl, The Comet, The Black Hood, The Web and Jaguar last saw print during the superhero craze of the mid-1960s. "The difference between them and the new group is like the difference between day and night," reported writer/artist Rich Buckler.

"We're writing for a different audience, for today's more sophisticated fan readership," said Buckler, a veteran who has done work for both Marvel and DC over the last nine years. "We're not going to consider the 1960s version which was written by Jerry Siegel for a younger audience. We'll be going into depth with the characters. It won't be just rock 'em-sock 'em fights."

Originally John C. Carbanaro licensed the characters for his own line of publications but then Archie Comics offered him a freelance contract to come edit the line under the old Red Circle banner. Red Circle was used in the mid-1970s for a small line of mystery/adventure books, most notably Gray Morrow's *Red Circle Sorcery*.

While the full line-up of talents involved in the book is incomplete, Frank Giacoia has already been signed up to provide a great deal of the inking. Lou Mana, who has worked with Buckler and Carbonaro before, will pencil the Web/Jaguar solo title to premiere early next year. Willy Blyberg will ink Mana's work.

Continuity will not be ignored as evidenced by the return of Eterno, a villain from Atlantis who appeared in *Fly Man* in 1965. The Brain Emperor will also return and put together a formidable enough force to give the Crusaders a worthy challenge.



Red Circle's first title.

It should be noted that Archie Comics began in the 1940s as a publisher of superhero comics including *Pep, Top-Notch, Hangman, Black Hood, Shield-Wizard*, and *Jackpot* which also featured a minor back-feature starring a red-headed teen name Archie. The first Shield, the original patriotic superhero, will leave the Crusaders after the first issues to star in his own title. *The Double Life of Private Strong*'s Lancelot Strong, the Shield introduced in 1959 will remain with the team. That Shield's son will retire as part of the continuity.

The Black Hood seen in the stories will be the revised version by Gray Morrow, which was reprinted in *JCP Presents* #1, released last Spring. He'll be the original Black Hood's cousin. "The Comet will design a new Hood Cycle for him," Buckler added.

The alien Comet will also leave the Crusaders after a time for his own book which will highlight science fiction stories. It will also be revealed that The Hangman will

be his brother.

In addition, there are plans to revive other characters such as the Fox, Steel Sterling, Mr. Justice, and the Firefly. Several trial issues of these and some heroes from the Crusaders will be published, to become series if their sales on the direct market seem promising.

"We've been gearing up for this for 20 years," said Rich Goldwater, who edited *Mighty Crusaders* back in the '60s. He's the son of John Goldwater, publisher of Archie Comics. The revival, said Goldwater, was also prompted by the good sales of the two *Archie Super-Hero* digests in 1979, which reprinted super-hero stories from the 1960s and unpublished material from Red Circle. "We're not suddenly bursting on the scene; we've been doing comics for 40 years. I hope the initial reaction will be supportive. We are looking for fan input and we're leaving things open for suggestions and improvements."

—*Lou Mougin*

IN MEMORIAM

Gene Day: Dweller By a Dark Stream

Editor's Note: When Gene Day passed away at the age of 31, the entire comics industry was shocked but none more so than his frequent collaborator, Doug Moench. We asked Doug to write something that would help put Gene's career in the proper perspective. We are all saddened by Gene's death but grateful to Doug's words in helping to express our sorrow.

From June to September, it's been one hell of a summer. Birth, death, the fates of two babies, the end of one job, the start of another. . .

And the stunning loss of Gene Day, an extraordinary man and friend whom I never met. Bear with me, if you will. . .

Until my wife Debi gave birth to my first son on June 14, I had long thought of *Master of Kung Fu* as my only "baby." Now there would be another, and it was easy in June that I paged through a book of names in search of something suitable for the coming child. If male, Deb and I decided, he would be named Derek. Loathing politicians almost as much as kings, we weren't too thrilled with the meaning of the name—"ruler of all the people"—but we *did* like the sound of it and a rose, as they say, is one a rose. . .

Still, since meanings are difficult to ignore, I decided to see what the book had to say about my own name. This is what I found for Douglas: "Dweller by the dark stream." I think I may have cackled. Being half Scottish, you see, I'd been craving to do a story about a crusty Scotsman who never says die, no matter how thoroughly the forces of evil conspire against him. There'd be treasure buried somewhere on his ancestral land, and the bad guys would use some phony deeds in order to secretly obtain land away from him. But the recalcitrant Scotty— much likeme, I thought—would refuse to budge. Instead taking up a ritual march back and forth across his heathered hilltop from dawn to dusk, day after indignant day, playing his bagpipes in bold defiance of eviction and even death. Somehow Shang-Chi would become involved, but without stealing so much as a single volt of thunder from the heroically obstinate Scotsman. And now, by simply adding "dark" to the water to his land, the very meaning of my name would become the title of Jook McBridle's story: "Dweller by the Dark Stream."

Gene Day was also a Scot, and so it would be a perfect story on which to join our blood. Indeed, it turned out to be our last, our unsuspected swansong—and, as these things will happen, fate shaped it into a disturbingly entertaining far more to Gene's principles than to mine, regardless of the meaning of names.

We had a great time doing it. Gene was starting to attract considerable acclaim within the field, among peers and fans alike. Everyone was suddenly mentioning his *Master of Kung Fu* work in tones of awe. Or at least *almost* everyone. . .

It then happened, you see, that someone operating under the grievous delusion of being a big editor, decided, for whatever idiotic reasons, to bite off Gene's head, bringing the glorious roll to a summarily screeching halt. This is called power, damn it all and forever, if only I could.

But Gene was, in fact, confronted with more than abused power. He was slammed in the face with an outrageous and untenable ultimatum: either change the way he did *everything*. . . or else.

It hit him where he lived and I for one wasn't in the least surprised when he marched, playing his bagpipes boldly— even though he said with heartfelt conviction that the day he was "forced to quit" was the worst day of his life. He also told me, "But geez, Doug, if I have to go, I'd just as soon go out on that last shot of old Jook up on the hill playing his pipes." Frustrated as I was at what was being torn away from us, I had to agree.

* * *

Gene packed a wallop of work into his brief time. Black and white illustrations for many science fiction magazines and books. Scads more for innumerable fanzines. Striking work for Mike Friedrich's *Star*Reach* publications. Inking for DC, Warren, and Marvel. He established Dark Fantasy/Shadows Press, publishing several books independently, among them *All Things Dark and Dangerous*; *The Art of Gene Day*. Then, of course, there was his fully rendered work—pencils and inks—on *Master of Kung Fu*.

Yet in spite of his enormous accomplishments within the span of such a relatively short career, Gene was really just beginning, just starting to hit the stride which would have pulled him cleanly away from the pack and thrust him into the ranks of the great ones. And he left behind so many things undone. . .

Donning/Starblaze wanted him to illustrate books.

There was talk of doing *The Shadow* in comics form.

With tremendous enthusiasm he had agreed to do, with me, the *Batman* feature in *Detective Comics*.

And eventually, we'd planned, there would be the co-creation of an entirely new series designed to satisfy both of us in ways nothing else ever had.

What, I wonder now, were we waiting for?

It was high time and we were both starting to dream in even higher gear, full speed ahead, with stars in our eyes and nothing but reckless, joyous damnation for every torpedo lurking in the waters.

And now. . . ?

* * *

I've said I never met him, but that pertains only to the flesh. We engaged in many a marathon phone call, always ending with promises that someday soon he'd come down to my place in Pennsylvania, or I'd blaze a trail north to his home in Gananoque, Ontario. "Geez, you'd love it, Doug—the place is literally packed to the gunwales with stuff, books and zines, records and ref-

(*Continued on page 24*)

MARVEL COMICS

1983 Schedule Set

Marvel announced their new schedule for 1983 on October 13 including nine miniseries, eight graphic novels, five new series, and three cancellations. We'll have details next issue, but here's a quick rundown:

Master of Kung-Fu #25, *Spider-Woman* #50, *Team America* #12, and *Ghost Rider* #61 will be the last issues for those series when *Ka-Zar* #25, *Dazzler* #26, *Micronauts* #51 and *Moon Knight* #31 mark the beginning of bi-monthly publication. Cancellations indicate the bottom sellers; the other changes were implemented to make room on the schedule for the new books

New regular series include John Byrne's *Alpha Flight*, introducing two new members; *US 1-Adventures on the Open Road*, a humor/adventure book about truckers created by Al Milgrom; *Funny Animals*, a book editor Larry Hama promises will be true to the funny animal genre and include work by Tom DeFalco, *Crazy's* Steve Mellor, and Marie Severin; *Mantis*, a new martial arts character developed by Denny O'Neil and Frank Miller, and *Crystar*, a new bi-monthly created by Marvel for Remco Toys. The book, by Mary Jo Duffy, Brett Blevins, and Vince Colletta features crystal people, lava men, and a fantasy setting.

Mini-series include *Cloak and Dagger* by Bill Mantlo & Rich Leonardi; *Sub-Mariner* by J.M. DeMatteis & Bob Budiansky; *Hercules* by Bob Layton; *Hawkeye* written and pencilled by Mark Gruenwald; *Machine Man* by Tom DeFalco & Herb Trimpe; *Nightcrawler* by Chris Claremont; *Ilyana and Storm* by Claremont & Armando Gil; *Wonder Man* written by David Michelinie; and *Kull the Conqueror* which will be Marvel's first 48 page, $1.25 comic using the Mando paper the alternatives have started using.

On the graphic novel front, Alan Weiss will do two, *Sculf* and *Wanderwar*; Dave Cockrum will be offering *The Mysterlone*; Roger Stern is writing a *Dr. Strange* volume; Bob Layton will contribute a second *Spider-Man* novel; Chris Claremont and John Bolton will do *Black Dragon*, a new creation; Ron Wilson is working on the futuristic *Super Fighters* and David Michelinie will write an *Avengers* novel.

EXHIBITS

Cavalcade of American Comics in New York

Who could resist three-foot-high posters of the Phantom, Beetle Bailey and Dick Tracy?

Thousands of New Yorkers couldn't as they swarmed the Cavalcade of Amencan Comics exhibit in midtown Manhattan late last summer. The exhibit featured samples from more than 100 different black-and-white and color strips, ranging from Richard Outcault's landmark *Yellow Kid* to Guy and Brad Gilchrist's *The Muppets*. About 20 artists appeared to draw new cartoons or autograph old masterpieces. Even Ronald Reagan participated, donating "presidential doodles" to the show.

All of which made the sponsors of the event, the Newspaper Comics Council and the Museum of Cartoon Art, very happy. "I'm pleased to see this type of exposure for comic art," said Chuck Green, the young co-director of the Portchester, N.Y. museum. He said the exhibit's success proves that comic strips are now gaining acceptance as "an indigenous popular art form like jazz and cinema."

Green helped select some of the art for the exhibition, which included the presidential doodles, a special series of printed lithographs, color posters and the council's traveling showcase of original newspaper strips dating back 90 years. "The hardest part was cutting the material down," he said. "We could've filled two floors."

There was still plenty to see. Visitors could gawk at large full-color drawings of Hagar the Horrible and marvel at the intricate detail of an early *Prince Valiant*. They could view such rare old strips as *Buster Brown* and *Katzenjammer Kids*, as well as modern favorites like *Peanuts*, *Doonesbury* and *Broom Hilda*.

In the process, visitors could also learn a little about the "colorful" history of the American newspaper strip. According to the council, a non-profit group formed by syndicated cartoonists, newspapers and syndicates to promote comic strips, the modern strip has its roots in the great newspaper wars of the 1890s. Comics, it was quickly discovered, helped boost circulation tremendously. Soon newspapers were publishing full-fledged comics sections, including large color inserts on Sundays.

Although today's newspaper strips are maybe half the size of their predecessors 20 years ago and (as Garry Trudeau recently made clear) the demands of producing those strips have greatly increased, the council estimates that more than 500 cartoonists are still drawing strips each day.

—Alan Breznick

DC COMICS

Superman and Lois Lane to Break Up

Major overhauling is being done on the Superman comics and characters DC Comics said in September. The effects of these plans will take place in *Superman* and *Action Comics* going on sale in January.

All supporting characters, including Perry White, Jimmy Olsen, Lana Lang and Steve Lombard, will be updated and made more integral to the stories. One example will be an upcoming storyline where Perry White goes through a divorce and everyone at the *Daily Planet* must cope with the after-effects.

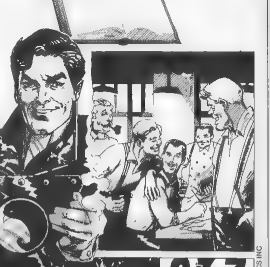
The most dramatic change will be that Superman and Lois Lane will break up. This is being done to give characters chances to get involved with other people.

DC Prescident and Publisher Jenette Kahn has been actvely involved with Editor Julius Schwartz and scripters Cary Bates and Marv Wolfman. Curt Swan, regular penciller on the two titles for some 15 years, is leaving *Action* so different looks can be added to the two books. Gil Kane will now be *Action*'s regular penciller. DC did not know what Swan will do with the time in his schedule.

Some of the striking changes to be made in the rouge's gallery will be seen in next spring's 45th Anniversary issue of *Action Comics*. Bates and George Perez are working on a revamped Luthor story while Wolfman is rethinking the Brainiac character.

Both writers will be given the others' plots through Schwartz in an effort to tie the two books closer together.

In other news: Kane will indeed by doing a four-issue *Atom* mini-series, as we speculated in issue five. Plotted by Kane, it will be scripted by Jan Strnad. It is on the schedule for late Spring... Joe Kubert's 12 issue maxiseries is on the schedule for a late 1983 release and the *History of the DC Universe* maxiseries will premiere over the summer... *Amethyst, Princess of the Gem World* has been upgraded from direct-only series to regular newsstand series. It will also be DC's first maxiseries. The preview story will be in *Legion of Super-Heroes #298* in January to be followed by the monthly in February... Gerry Conway has scripted an extra-long Batman story for *Detective Comics #526*, celebrating the 500th Batman appearance in the title. No artist has been announced. The $1.50 book will be 64 pages on the new Mando paper used by other publishers. This represents an upgraded paper but a loss of eight story pages... Trevor VonEeden will not be doing the *Deadman* mini-series after all. He's too busy with another mini-series, *Green Arrow* which is being written by Mike W. Barr for Spring release.



Editor Marv Wolfman has corraled a number of interesting artists to contribute back-up stories to *Blackhawk*. Here is a page from Howard Chaykin and he will be joined over the next few months by people like John Severin and Alex Toth.

Last Minute News: The *Green Arrow* mini-series has replaced *Deadman* on the schedule and Dick Giordano will ink the four-issue series... a *Justice League* mini-series has been announced for late 1983 ...The rumored new Batman team book now is on the schedule for a preview in April and its own title in May. *Batman and the Outsiders* (tentative title) will team the caped crusader with six other heroes, some of which will be new. Batman will also leave the JLA. The creative team is Mike W. Barr and Jim Aparo... DC plans on one and hopes for two or three graphic novels in 1983... *Detective #526* will feature art by Don Newton and Dick Giordano while introducing the new Robin. This will leave Dick Grayson costumeless and soul-searching in the *New Teen Titans*. Young Jason Todd, the new Robin, will have an origin story much like Grayson.

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COMIC STRIPS

Doonesbury Takes a Vacation

Garry Trudeau says it's time to rethink the direction and characters populating *Doonesbury*. The strip, which he created while a student at Yale, began as a syndicated feature in 28 papers in 1970 and has grown to include more than 700 daily and Sunday newspapers.

Originally a satirical look at the college students and politics, the strip has now grown up and creator Trudeau feels "my characters are understandably confused and out of sorts. It's time to give them some $20 haircuts, graduate them and move them out into the larger world of grown-up concerns. The trip from draft beer and mixers to cocaine and herpes is a long one and it's time they got a start on it." Recently, Zoniker began yet another semester of college and panicked because, with one credit to go, it looks like he'll actually graduate.

Trudeau went on to add, "There are a few problems to be ironed out. For almost 15 years, the main characters have been trapped in a time warp and so find themselves carrying the colors and scars of two generations."

"I need a breather," Trudeau said through a prepared statement. The strip will cease publication as of January 2, 1983 with the birth of Joanie's Caucus's baby and there will be break lasting up to 29 months. United Press Syndicate has urged fans to write in and ask for Trudeau to return with all due haste.

"Investigative cartooning is a young man's game," Trudeau, 34, went on to say "Since the industry frowns on vacations, I'll be claiming a medical leave. This is simply a lull in the action. It is not, repeat not, a mid-life crisis."

IT'S NO USE. ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS, THERE'S JUST NO WAY OUT OF IT THIS TIME.
OUT OF WHAT, ZONIK?
GRADUATION. THE ONLY THING BETWEEN ME AND THE REAL WORLD IS ONE UNFUNNABLE CRIMINOLOGY COURSE!
GOOD. THEN YOU CAN COME IN WITH ME TERRY AND SIGN UP FOR SOME JOB INTERVIEWS.
JOB INTERVIEWS?
UH-HUH
LET ME RECHECK MY FIGURES
MAYBE YOU CAN BREAK THE KILN
ART: © UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

ANIMATION

Strikers Want End to Runaway Clause

American Jobs for American People!" has been the outcry of 1,600 striking members of the Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists union, Local 839, since August 5. The major issue has been the demand by several animation companies to eliminate the "runaway clause" from the 1979 agreement. The three year contract "stipulates that a producer *must* hire our people back first," explains Harry 'Bud' Hester, business representative for MPSC. "To consider hiring those animators who worked for that studio within the previous year, before sending work overseas to Korea or Taiwan.

"An animator in Korea, for example, makes $50 per month," he adds, "whereas, a beginner in America earns $577 per week. Now the studios want to delete that clause completely! We can't expect to lower our standards or our wages to compete with that.

"It's not a matter of the contract hurting them, it's a matter of them wanting to make 60% or more in profits. They could basically eliminate 50% of *our* people by sending out work. We aren't asking for full (membership) employment, we aren't asking for guaranteed employment for a whole year—when they have a product to do, we want our share of it.

"As it is now, we only work six months out of the year," Hester noted, referring to the sometimes erratic scheduling and purchasing of television shows by the networks for Saturday mornings. That is one reason the union is so eager to ensure that more jobs remain in America.

The major studios have refused comment at press time.

Breakthroughs have since been made with several smaller studios, including Ziggy Productions (the forthcoming *Ziggy* special for Christmas), Filmation Productions (*Gilligan's Planet*) and Don Bluth Productions. The "ground-breaking contract" with Bluth, according to MPSC executive board member Steve Zupkas, will allow "all their employees that work on a feature to share a percentage of the profits in both the feature and merchandising royalties. However, they'll be getting a smaller pay increase than the rest of the industry.

"Bluth has temporarily lost their backers for *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*," Zupkas adds, "but, in the meantime, they will be doing a couple commercials, I believe, and they are looking into the possibility of doing another TV special."

More than 30% of the union's membership is back to work with the signing of these studios. Still struck, however, are Hanna-Barbera, Warner Brothers, Walt Disney Productions and Marvel Productions. The first three studios are represented by the Association of Motion Picture and Television Producers in their negotiations. "Marvel Productions has stated that the earliest date they could meet with us is the end of September," says Zupkas.

At press time Disney was unsure if their *Mickey's Christmas Carol* will be delayed from its scheduled December opening.

"We're advocating a boycott," Hester adds. "We would like viewers to turn off their TV set or switch to another station when these particular companies' shows come on." To which Zupkas commented that this could even go as fas as "refusal to purchase their merchandising products, such as Disney's *Tron* ." [Ed. Note: The strikers settled with the studios in mid-October and returned to work.]

—William R. Lund

IN MEMORIAM

Ernie Bushmiller 1905-1982

Fritzi Ritz needed a new cartoonist when Larry Whittington left the strip so in stepped Ernie Bushmiller. From 1925 until August 15, 1982, Bushmiller continued the strip which grew into *Nancy*. Bushmiller died at age 76, at his Connecticut home, after a long illness.

Bushmiller was born in the Bronx in 1905 and after dropping out of high school, he took a copy boy's position at the *New York Evening World* and took night classes at the National Academy of Design.

United Feature Syndicate picked up *Fritzi Ritz* six years after Bushmiller started and by the early 1930s, Nancy, a chunky little girl with a red bow in her hair, began to turn up often. 1940 saw the strip renamed *Nancy* after the character who became exceptionally popular.

As the years went on, Nancy, her friend Sluggo and Aunt Fritzi (as she later was called) ran in hundreds of newspapers around the world. It was both loved and criticized for its simplicity in art and humor. Slight gags became the strip's most popular form of humor although the misadventures of the little girl also kept the strip going.

"They may be brats," Bushmiller once said of Nancy and Sluggo, "but they don't play with meat choppers or dangerous weapons. I don't like cruel humor." He was awarded cartoonist of the year in 1978 by the National Cartoonists Society.

Bushmiller, who had also briefly worked as a writer for Harrold Lloyd, is survived by his wife Abby, and two sisters.

Right now TBG subscribers are reading the news you'll be reading everywhere else a month from now.

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INDEPENDENT PRESS

Jerry Siegel writes for Eclipse, Michael Golden Joins Pacific

ECLIPSE ENTERPRISES

Jerry Siegel, co-creator of Superman and creator of the Spectre, will return to the typewriter for the first time in almost 20 years to write a new series. "The Starling" will run as the back-up feature in *Destroyer Duck* 2-7 with the art by Val Mayerik. An alien, known as "The Glowing Man," saves an earthwoman and fathers a child named Starling. The strip will be in the SF/adventure mode and publisher Dean Mullaney is enthusiastic about Siegel's work. *DD* #2 will be out in mid-November and continues the adventures of the Duck as he seeks revenge against Godzorp.

Frank Miller has been signed to provide two page pin-ups of classic detective characters, beginning in *Ms. Tree* #7. To accomodate Miller, the comic has been delayed until December.

Doug Moench is also working on a new monthly series for Eclipse, their first, but details have not yet been worked out.

Cat Yronwode has joined Eclipse as its Assistant Editor/Traffic Control Manager. She has been working with the Mullaney brothers for a while now and has officially joined the staff. She will continue her *Buyer's Guide* column, and editorial for Kitchen Sink's *The Spirit* and Ken Pierce's comic strip reprint line.

PACIFIC COMICS

Production delays were caused by the switchover from standard newsprint to the 37 pound Mando paper, Eclipse, First Comics and Red Circle have already announced they will use the Mando so new standards are being accepted across the board. The first two Pacific Mando books are *Pacific Presents* #1 and *Ms. Mystic* #1, both out in late September. *PP* has been switched over to a quarterly schedule while *Ms. Mystic* will be published as Pacific receives a completed issue from Neal Adams—the same system they are forced to use on *Starslayer* which they say is still late from Mike Grell. Issue five finally saw print in October.

Jack Kirby's new science fiction series, *Silver Star*, premiere's in November along with Pacific's first Baxter book, *Twisted Tales*, written and edited by Bruce Jones.

December will be busy for the firm since they will be releasing *Alien Worlds*, Jones's science fiction anthology. The cover was painted by Joe Chiodo and the first issue features art by Al Williamson, Tim Conrad, Val Mayerik and Nestor Redondo.

ARE TANGENT I FEAR FOR OUR CHARLES
AVERY IS IN AN UNSTABLE AND DANGEROUS CRUST IN DESPITE YOUR INCREASED WORK LOAD YOU MUST BE ESPECIALLY ATTENT IVE TO HER NEEDS
ACKNOWLEDGED
IT WILL BE DIFFICULT HER MENTAL STATE W'LL DETERIORATE, INTERFERING WITH OUR HIGHER FUNCTIONS UNLESS SHE IS TREATED IN TIME SHE WILL LOSE HER SANITY AND HER LIFE.
POSSIBLY BY HER OWN HAND WE MUST BE ON GUARD
SURELY STARSLAY WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE RADIATION
I DO NOT KNOW AND HARDLY THE ANSWER WOULD
NEVER OUR LIVING
ART: FREP AND PH L FOGLIO

A page from *D'Arc Tangent* #1, which should be out as you read this. The delayed project received editorial help from Chris Claremont and should be back on its quarterly schedule.

In addition to doing work for *Alien Worlds*, Michael Golden is also developing a new comic series to be published by Pacific in early 1983. Tentative plans call for the new character to have a 10 page premiere in *Captain Victory* #10, on sale in February. Around that time Pacific also plans to premiere their *Elric* comic from Roy Thomas, P. Craig Russell and Michael T. Gilbert.

Wild Animals sort of surprised us here at COMICS SCENE when Editor Dave Scroogy casually mentioned it too was coming in December. They had some extra press time so they decided to publish an experimental funny animal comic that was originally proposed to them some time ago by Scott Shaw! The 32 page, $1 comic features an offbeat cover pencilled by Shaw but the main characters and backgrounds were painted by Walt Stewart and Richard Hescox, respectively, giving it an unusual look. Shaw leads off with a 12 page story and most of the others are one-page shorts by the likes of Rick Geary, Larry Gonick, Sergio Aragones and Jim Engel.

Scroggy tells us that 1983 will be a big year for Pacific including *The Art of Al Williamson*, written by James Van Hise, the revised and updated *Spider-Man Index* with a new Michael Golden cover and more comics than ever before.

DEADSPAWN

Joe Treacy released the fourth volume in his *Deadspawn* series in August and the response to it by fans and non-fans has been extremely enthusiastic. Treacy reports that the magazine (?) has been doing quite well in book-store chains.

Deadspawn, for those unfamiliar with it, is really several one page features but the page and format is always different. Protected by a die-cut slipcase, the various pages unfold, pop-open, tell stories on both sides, features full-color illustrations and spans the fan and professional

comics world.

Issue four, for example, features poetry and art by Richard and Wendy Pini, a story by Trina Robbins, humor from Chuck Fiala, a cut-out from Rick Geary, a photolart story by Gene Day and a text story by Janet Fox, illustrated by Rudy Nebres. The back of the slipcase also features work by relative newcomer Stephen Sistilli, who people should be seeing more of in the future.

TITAN BOOKS

Pleased with the response to the first five *2000 A.D.* reprint volumes, the publishers have announced eight volumes to be published in 1983. Feburary will see 80 page volumes of *Judge Dredd Book Two* by John Wagner and Mike McMahon and *A.B.C. Warriors Book One* by Pat Mills, Kevin O'Neill and McMahon.

Judge Death by Wagner and Brian Bolland and *A.B.C. Warriors Book Two* will see print in 64 page formats in May.

Mills and O'Neill's *Nemesis Book One* and *Judge Child Book One* by Wagner, Bolland, McMahon and Ron Smith will be published as 96 page books in August.

Flesh Book One will be 96 pages and by Mills, Ramon Sola and others while *Judge Child Book Two* will see print in November.

Finally, *Charley's War Book One* from Mills and Joe Colquhoun will be scheduled for release sometime in 1983.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

Just before embarking on their first USA tour, Dave and Dani Sim sent word on what we can expect from their publishing company in the next several months. Most of the projects will feature work from people who have contributed *Unique Stories* to the back of *Cerebus the Aardvark*.

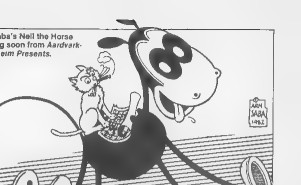
January will see release of Saba's *Neil the Horse* in a 60 page volume, retailing for $3.50. This was the originally planned book for this year.

Bill Loebs received such praise for his "Welcome to Heaven, Dr. Franklin" stories that he has now planned a six issue mini-series that will begin this fall.

Strange Brew is a 60 page anthology from Michael T. Gilbert which will mix all-new material with some old fan-press work he did with Jeff Bonivert. This $3.50 volume will be out by the end of this year.

FANTAGRAPHICS

Nemo: The Classic Comics Library will be a monthly magazine devoted to reprinting classic comic strips. Edited by historian Rick Marschall, the magazine will



retail for $2.95 and is set to premiere this winter. Contents for the first issue include a complete *Terry and the Pirates* story by Milt Caniff, 1930s Sunday pages of *Gasoline Alley* and *Polly and her Pals*, the complete run of Alfred Andriola's *Yankee Rangers*, an interview with Dik Browne, Bill Blackbeard on George Herriman, never-before published cartoons by Carl Barks and a portfolio of T.S. Sullivan's art. This is the first serious attempt to capture comic strips in a package since *The Menomonee Falls Gazette* began operations nearly a decade ago. Efforts are being made by the publishers and Marschall to ensure that the best reproductions are found for the strips and attention will be paid to the printing process.

Hugo, written and drawn by Milton Knight, Jr., will be a new funny animal series with the first issue released in October. Hugo is a cat, also the court jester to King Adolph of Rottingham, a "screwy" medieval kingdom. The 8½ x 11 title will sell for $1.50.

Fantagraphics is continuing to expand the scope of their publications with both regular feature magazines, continuing comic books and one-shot volumes such as the two-volume *X-Men Companion* and *Los Tejanos*. They too say 1983 will be a busy, expansive year for them.

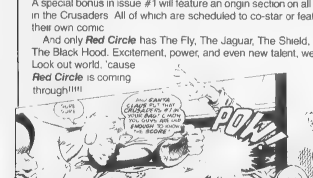
The MIGHTY CRUSADERS are back...and RED CIRCLE has them!

The 32-page **color** comic will be printed on ***white*** stock with a one dollar price tag. ***The Mighty Crusaders***, like the rest of the ***Red Circle Comics*** due out. will be a hot collectors item

Issue #1, top Marvel and D.C. artist, Rich Buckler, will do the editing, writing and art. The first book features 8 earth-shattering superheroes A special bonus in issue #1 will feature an origin section on all 8 heroes in the Crusaders All of which are scheduled to co-star or feature in their own comic

And only ***Red Circle*** has The Fly, The Jaguar, The Shield, and The Black Hood. Excitement, power, and even new talent, we got it

Look out world. 'cause ***Red Circle*** is coming through!!!!!



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BRUCE SWEENEY'S UNDERGROUND STATION

BRITISH U.G.'s (OR HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER) DEPT.

Well, I never visited Buckingham Palace but while I was in London, I certainly spent my time tracking down old undergrounds and the current publishers and artists. Tony Bennett, publisher of *Knockabout Comics* showed me some of the projected art for the next Knockabout and some of it is "bloody smashing." He's taking some chances on artists that are not as well known as previously but I'd say that the *Knockabout* line is one of the best edited around.

The *PSST* magazine is even nicer than our *Heavy Metal*. It's certainly every bit as slick and features less serialization. Unfortunately, there is no current distributor in the U.S. which is a real loss because it features some fabulous artwork. My hunch/opinion is that there is a potential to sell this magazine to a lot of Americans that won't want to be without it. [Capital Comics has picked it up for distribution.-ED]

PSST features a chapter of "The Adventures of Luther Arkwright" every issue by Brian Talbot. Those of you who have seen the British Near Myths are familiar with it. It's one of the finest serials in adult graphics that I've ever seen. Luther Arkwright is a special agent that contends with adversaries of Empire and on a number of different time parallels; flitting from 19th to 21st century settings with lots of action and intense detail.

Brian painstakingly researches the weaponry and social environments of his stories spending often two days on a page. Much of his panelwork is clearly approached as camera shots. He recently did much of the graphics and was featured in a film on the British science fiction writer, Robert Shaw. *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright* vol. #1 is due out in '83 and a collection of Talbot's Chester P. Hackenbush stories (sort of an English Harold Hedd) is also in the planning stage. With outstanding luck, I'll have a Talbot logo adorning this column in 1983.

Fandom Confidential by Jim Engels and Chuck Fiala should soon be with us from Kitchen Sink as well as *Bizarre Sex* #10 with the sequel to the highly-regarded "Omaha" story as presented in *Bizarre Sex* #9.

Larry Ripes claims that he'll have one page in *Eclipse* #6.

The multi-talented Jaxon reports that he's completed an article on 18th century Texas ranching and is looking for a publisher. Fanzine collectors will recall that Jaxon did an excellent article on undergrounds in *Infinity* #4.

MAKING THE BIG-TIME DEPT:

Crumb's *Early Jazz Greats* card set got a mention in the September *Playboy* which also mentioned Kitchen Sink's Skip Williamson and J. Michael Leonard. Paul Mavrides of Rip Off Press has illustrated a feature on William Burroughs for *Research* magazine. . .

. . .Spain recently did the Septi

Oct cover for *Humanist* Brad Foster has finished an airbrush cover for an upcoming issue of *Different Worlds* and had a double page illustration in the Sept *Amazing Screhce Fiction*. . . Clark Dsarneyer did a political cartoon for a local paper, the Whittier Globe.

ASSORTED INDEPENDENTS

One reason for the decline of underground sales, has been the increase of independent undergrounds done by people who are committed enough to their talents (and egos) to self-publish. Obviously there has been substantial activity lately. Anthony Smith has *Paper Cuts*, $2.50 postpaid from him at 1414 Lynnview Dr., Houston, Texas featuring Stazer, an impressive newcomer. Ken Moran has *Li'l Elzonian #1 & 2*; a 75¢ mini from him at 2168 Sherbrook, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C-2B6. . . *Junior Jackslope* is an interesting 7" x 9" glossy first effort by Bob Crais who also features the "famous pirate" Dan O'Neil gracing the interior. It features the adventures of Junior Jackalope and Sucicide Squirrel and its $1.50 from Bud Plant. *Beastie & the Boo* is a $1 mini from Jacques Bovin; 463 B'way.; S.F. Ca. 94133. . . *Guts #2* is out from Steve Lafler; $2 pp P.O. Box 982; Eugene, Or 97440. . . *Dogtown Zoo* is a $2 pp 8½" x 7" effort from Steve Willis, Rte 1, Box 117; Langhorne, Pa. 19047. . . Michael Roden should have *Monster Comix* and *Crazy Men* out by now with stunning paper stock, drop him a line.

This month we should be seeing a new alternative title, *Comicsfast* which will feature material by Rudi Franke, George Kochel, Tim Fuller and others. It will be a 2-color cover. . . *Hardboiled Annuals #2* should be out in early 1983. The cover will be by George Kochel, who made his u.g. debut in Kitchen's *Mod. Hardboiled #2* will feature George Erling and Tim Fuller among others. Brouhaha Studios, 1718 High-land Ave., Portsmouth, Ohio 45662. STARLOG's new Managing Editor Dave McDonnell will have a story in it. . . Brad Foster's *Fever Pitch #5* should be with us by now, he's lined up contributions from Tim Boxell, Cliff Neal and some new faces as well. Contact Brad at 4108 Pleasant Run Irving, Texas 75062.

I can't wait to get my copy of the new Corben/Strand *Jeremy Brood* the 48 page full color book from Fantagor Press for $5.95.

Back to the "professional" undergrounds, Leonard Rifas' Educomics will be publishing *I Saw It* by Keji Nakazawa It's an autobiographical story by the Japanese cartoonist about the survival of the bombing of Hiroshima. It will be done in full color. With Leonard's highly developed sense of morality, it should be an important book.

NATIONAL LAMPOON *Zippy* to Join Funny Pages

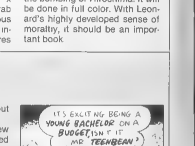
Bill Griffith's *Zippy the Pin Head* will be joining the *National Lampoon's* Funny Pages with the December issue. The one page black and white strip will be all new material and part of Art Director Michael Grossman's plan to beef up the comics content of the humor magazine

"The *Lampoon* originally had a lot more comics in it and when I joined, nine months ago, I was pushing for these changes—to bring the magazine back to what it used to do," he said in September.

In the same issue with *Zippy's* debut, Tod Carol has written a six page comic, "Herb Crawley, Armageddon, M.D." which will be illustrated by Michael Golden. Howard Nostrand will also illustrate "S.D.," a retelling of *E.T.* but featuring Sammy Davis, Jr.

The following month, a new strip will also join the expanded Funny Pages. This one will be written by the team of Ted Mann and Sean Kelly and will be illustrated by P. Craig Russell. The first installment of "King of the Castle" will be three pages in color and then will be a one page feature.

For comics collectors, Grossman pointed out that they have run numerous features lately from people like Bill Sienkiewicz and Walt Simonson, who did a hilarious parody of George Herriman's *Krazy Kat*. Alan Weiss also did recently, a nine-page parody on *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, which was colored by Jim Sherman.



A panel from Bill Griffith's Zippy the Pin Head, now a regular part of the *National Lampoon*.

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2½ Carrots Tall

TV's First Animated Cartoon Star

Part 2: The Stories of Crusader Rabbit

By FRED PATTEN

Editor's Note: Last issue Fred brought us the fascinating behind-the-scenes story of where Crusader Rabbit came from and how he got onto the television screen. In this final part we present an episode guide of the many adventures Cru and Rags the Tiger participated in.

Television Arts Productions (Black & White) Series, 1949-51, 10 Adventures.

Crusader vs the State of Texas (15 episodes)

Texas decides to deport every last jackrabbit to the North Pole. Crusader and Rags journey to the Lone Star state to campaign for rabbit's civil rights, but they narrowly avoid getting lynched whenever they say a good word about bunnies. They learn from Frank Sawbuck, the Rabbit and Hare Removal Commissioner of Texas, that the rabbits have been eating all the carrots in the state. Without the vitamin-packed vegetable the cowboys are losing their eyesight which is crucial to their famous sure-shooting. Crusader persuades the rabbits to switch their diet to cream puffs, and everybody is happy.

Crusader vs The Pirates (20 episodes)

Crusader and Rags, out fishing, find a note in a bottle that leads them to bobbing Dunkin Island, whose above/below water existence has led its natives to evolve into merbunnies. The island, currently above water, has become the lair of Black Bilge and his pirates who are planning to steal all the silverware in New York City. Crusader tries to warn New York but is too late and is blamed for the theft. He returns to the island to recover the silver but is captured. Just as he and Rags are about to become dinner for the pirates, Dunkin Island submerges again. The merbunnies rescue our heroes and the loot.

Crusader and the Rajah of Rinsewater (20 episodes)

The humans and tigers of Rinsewater, India used to live together peacefully but suddenly the Rajah begins trapping the tigers to steal their stripes to be made into India ink. The desperate tigers call on their cousin Rags and his pal Crusader. The two learn that benevolent prime minister Ali Oxenfree has been replaced by smooth-talking Dud ey Nightshade, who is out to loot the province. Our heroes sneak into Rinsewater Palace, kidnap the Rajah, and see him into a tiger suit so he will discover for himself how Dudley is actually mistreating his subjects.

Crusader and the Schmohawk Indians (15 episodes)

The once-proud Schmohawk tribe, reduced to a handful of timid braves, try to capture and eat Rags to gain his tiger strength. Crusader persuades them to adopt a more modern approach: pretend to go on the warpath and get lots of newspaper publicity to win some respect. But the public panics, and the President calls out Gen. Horsewhip and the U.S. Army to quell the uprising. The cowardly Schmohawks flee into the desert and stumble into a hidden outlaw town run by Babyface Barracuda. The former Public Enemy No. 1 gets the idea to start robbing nearby banks in disguise as the Schmohawks, so the Indians will be blamed. Crusader and Rags have to escape from Gen. Horsewhip, free the Schmohawks from Robber's Roost's jail, and bring the Barracuda gang to justice.

Crusader and the Great Horse Mystery (15 episodes)

An old pal, Andiron the Fire Horse, calls Crusader and Rags to Oatville, Kentucky, heart of the bluegrass country, where the steeds have been mysteriously vanishing. Oatville is the home of two companies, Potter's Paste and Glub's Glue. Kindly Peter Potter has long produced the better stickum, but whister Gaston Glub has recently come up with a super glue from a secret ingredient which Crusader discovers to be horses' hooves. Glub and his goons frame Potter and our heroes as the horsenappers. Crusader and Rags must clear themselves and represent Potter in the glue test to stop Glub from winning a "nice, juicy Government contract" by default.

Crusader and the Circus (10 episodes)

Our heroes visit Rags' childhood home, Col. E. Pluribus Truepenny's traveling circus. But the once-happy circus is sunk in gloom. Kindly Col. Truepenny has disappeared, leaving a will giving the circus to sadistic ringmaster Whetstone Whiplash and his hulking, stupid assistant, strongman Achilles the Heel. Whiplash tricks Rags into a cage and claims him as recovered circus property. Crusader must find out what happened to Col. Truepenny to free Rags and rescue the circus from Whetstone's tyranny.

Crusader and the Tenth Century (30 episodes)

Merrie Olde England isn't so merry when the dastardly Blaggard Brothers (Blackheart, Brimstone, and Bigot) of Redlem Castle terrorize the countryside. They demand the hand in marriage of old Sir Chester Chillblain's beautiful daughter, Mary Anne. Sir Chester's court magician casts a spell to bring two heroes from the future to aid him. Guess who? Crusader and Rags, stuffed into a single suit of armor, win the tourney, but the Blaggards kidnap Mary Anne and imprison her in their castle which is guarded by the two-headed dragon, Arson & Sterno. Crusader and Rags sneak into the castle, free Mary Anne, and show the dragon that the contract forcing him to work for the villians is really a recipe for gooseberry tarts. But no sooner is Mary Anne restored than the entire Blaggard clan besieges Sir Chester's castle. Crusader gambles everything on winning Arson & Sterno's help.

Crusader and the Mad Hollywood Scientist (15 episodes)

Prof. Belfrey O. Batts is a successful inventor but a frustrated actor. He creates a gloom juice to uglify all Hollywood actors in revenge. Crusader and Rags try to bring him to his senses, but he seizes Rags and gives the tiger's handsome body to his scrawny assistant, Vernon the Vulture, via a brain-switching machine before throwing them out. Crusader and Rags the Vulture break back into the laboratory and feed the Prof. some of the discarded by-product of his gloom juice; the happiness extract. But can the reformed scientist help them stop Vernon the Tiger before he uglifies Hollywood, and before a fire destroys the brain-switching machine and strands Rags in the vulture's body?

Crusader and the Leprechauns (25 episodes)

A group of Irish leprechauns moves into Galahad Glen, Crusader & Rags' woodland home town. Though they mean well, their pots of gold attract human fortune-hunters who tear the animal's homes apart. The leprechauns have been driven out of Ireland by a greedy giant, Finn McCool XIII, so Crusader decides to get rid of the giant so the leprechauns can return home. Crusader, Rags, their pal Garfield Groundhog, and leprechaun chief Finnegan journey to Ireland to confront the giant in his cave.When

Crusader vs. the State of Texas.

it turns out that nobody has actually seen McCool, only his corresponding secretary Dudley Nightshade acting for him, Crusader suspects what's really going on. But proving it is another matter!

Crusader and the Showboat (25 episodes)

Crusader, Rags, and Garfield Groundhog save an old-time Mississippi showboat from destruction. Captain Huckleberry tells them he has been jinxed by that hideous river ghost, headless Oarsman; but Crusader discovers that the real villians are Whetstone Whiplash and Achilles the Heel, now posing as Sternwheel Jackson and Rhett Butler of the rival gambling boat *Jezebel*. Our heroes first have to help Captain Huckleberry raise enough money to pay off the mortgage on his *Levee Belle*, then prove that Sternwheel and Rhett are the culprits when the Turkey Ripple town bank is robbed.

TV Spots (Color) Series, 1957-59, 13 Adventures, all 20 Episodes Apiece; Also Presented as One-Hour Features.

The Great Uranium Hunt Movie title: *Mine Your Own Business*

Gambler E.Z. Mooney wins all the money in Galahad Glen. Crusader, Rags and Garfield go uranium prospecting to buy Mooney out. Dudley Nightshade (posing as Nightly Dudshade) and Bilious Greene follow to kill Rags because of a phoney insurance policy naming Dud as the beneficiary. Dud drops a giant rock on Rags, which turns out to be a dinosaur egg. Seymour, the baby dino, has a beautiful voice, so Dud and Bilious try to dinosaurnap him and sell him to TV. Dud convinces E.Z. Mooney to cancel our heroes' debut in exchange for Seymour. Crusader agrees, because he knows the dinosaur's voice has gone bad; and the frustrated villians release the now-worthless Seymour.

The Yukon Adventure Movie Title: *Thar's Gold in Them Thar Fills*

The whole country is suffering from toothaches because all the dentists' gold for fillings, which comes from "a small mining town called If-Anyone-Can, Yukon," is being stolen. Crusader and Rags leave for the frozen North to catch the thief. Dudley Nightshade and Bilious Greene tag along to get the gold.

Tales of Schmerwood Forest Movie title: *Crook's Tour*

Robin Hoodlum and his henchmen, Al Catraz and Sam Quentin, set up operations in Schmerwood Forest near Galahad Glen. Their first operation is to hold Garfield Groundhog for ransom. Crusader and Rags pose as crooks and join the gang to sabotage their crimes. But Rags gets amnesia and believes he's a real robber.

Sahara You

Rags breaks a magic Arab hourglass and Galahad Glen falls under a spell. Crusader and Rags journey to a remote and mystical section of the Sahara Desert to replace the sand, followed by Dudley Nightshade who wants to get to the sacred sand first so he can control Galahad Glen. The adventure involves an abandoned Foreign Legion post, Fort Ve-Ate, and a sacred guardian of the sands, Moe Hamett, whose duty is to keep the sand hidden from Infidels.

West We Forget

Loudmouth, Wyoming is the noisiest town in the West, and the noise is disturbing Dr. Frank N. Stein in his nearby mountaintop repose, Withering Heights. When Stein overhears the toughest cowboy, Manny Oakley, say that only an Indian massacre will quiet them down, he prepares to launch one with radio-controlled wooden cigarstore Indians mounted on roller skates. Crusader and Rags try to warn the town, but find they have to become the toughest cowboys of all before anyone will listen to them—and Manny doesn't take kindly to competition.

Gullible's Travels

Crusader and Rags are sent by the Pentagon to Red China to rescue Professor Ed Foo Yung, nuclear physicist and inventor of Chinese checkers, from the clutches of Fooey Manchu and his stooge King Kong Wong, who are holed up in an ancient temple on the Yangtze which is guarded by Arson & Sterno, the two-headed dragon. The dragon is sorry to disappoint old pals, but he's loyal to his employers—until they make the mistake of trying to cheat him out of his pay.

Should Auld Acquaintance be for Cotton

Beautiful but deadly Southern belle Simone Legree hires Dudley Nightshade and Bilious Greene (alias Ill-Regard Beauregard and Jean La Fatto) help her drain all the rivers in America with water-absorbing giant sponge fish, so that the riverbeds can be paved as highways and she can get rich selling the white paint for the stripes down the middle. Our heroes naturally can't permit this.

Two On The Isle Movie title: *Nothing Atoll*

Crusader and Rags are cast away on a desert island where they help Enrico, son of Robinson Crusoe, find a buried treasure. Then the three have to protect it from pirate Captain Jolly Roger and his men, Cutlass Carl and Cannonball Paul.

Scars and Stripes

The National Holiday Society creates new holidays, supposedly for the public but actually for the benefit of the four con artists who run the society. They decide to proclaim Ragland T. Tiger Week, which the public will celebrate by sending them donations all week long. But the public sends its money directly to Rags in Galahad Glen. The bewildered Crusader and Rags decide to return the money, but Wearmouth, Chiselhurst, Snidewell, and Titus Canby are determined to get it away from them first.

The Apes of Wrath

A fortune awaits the first explorer to photograph the mysterious Apes of Wrath, who live near a jungle-choked temple lost in the Pygmy-infested, volcanic Belching Congo. Big game hunter Claude Beauty enlists Crusader and Rags in his safari, while Dudley Nightshade and Bilious Greene follow to steal the valuable photographs as soon as they're taken. (The secret of the apes turns out to be that their stomachs light up to read "Eat At Joe's.")

There's No Place Like Rome Movie title: *Caeser's Salad*

Rags falls asleep and dreams that he and Crusader are in ancient Rome. They become gladiators in the Coliseum, then bodyguards for Caeser. They win a galley race, are framed by Brutus for Caeser's murder, are sold into slavery and rescued by Nero, and narrowly escape the buring of Rome before Rags wakes up.

The Great Baseball Mystery Movie title: *Gone With The Wind-Up*

Dudley Nightshade and Bilious Greene, alias K.C. Strangel and Bats Belfry, try to sabotage Galahad Glen's baseball team while Rags is side-

Cru never let size get him down.

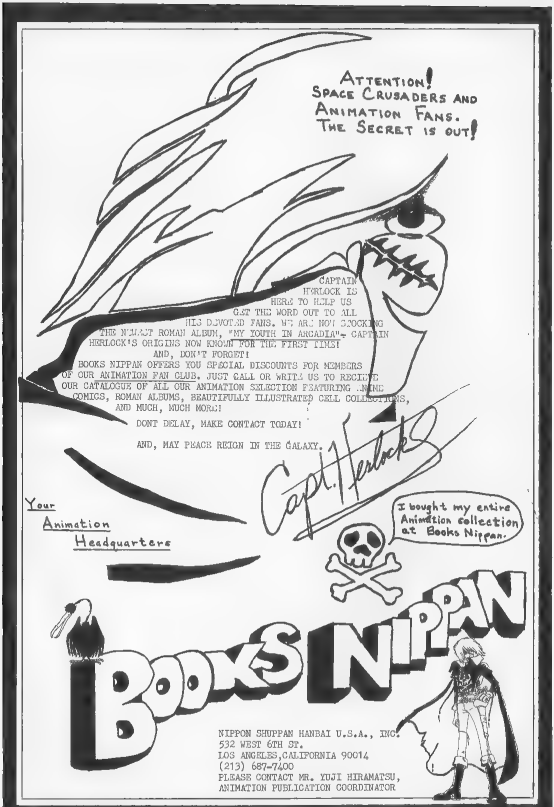
tracked trying to find Gertie the Tiger's missing cub.

The Search For The Missing Links

Beautiful but spooky Puttingwell Green golf course next to a Scottish lake is terrorized by booby-traps throughout the course and a stolen 18th hole. Golf tournament official Sandy McTraps calls in Crusader and Rags to uncover the secret of the monster of Veronica Lake.

The first part of this article stated that *Crusader Rabbit*'s current owner, Metromedia Producers Corporation, considers both the original black-&-white series and the later color series to be too old-fashioned for today's viewers. But this does not mean that Metromedia has shelved *Crusader Rabbit* for good. They are currently preparing a presentation for the TV networks to create a new *Crusader Rabbit* series for Saturday morning TV. The preparation is being done by a brand-new studio named Cinemation which has been assembled for this purpose. Cinemation is headed by Lee Orgel, the former head of distribution for TV Spots. (He also produced *Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol* for UPA, the first TV animated holiday-special feature in 1962.)

Since there is very little published information on Crusader Rabbit, *and since both Television Arts Productions and TV Spots are out of business and their records long since discarded, I would like to thank the individuals who consented to be interviewed and who dug out packed-away personal mementoes from 30 years ago to make this article possible; also those animation fans who shared material in their collections with me. In addition to those quoted in the article, these include: Bob Mills, Vern Louden, Bill Lieb, Bill Hurtz, Don Dewar, John Garofalo, Michael Lah, Mark Kausler, Tom Andrae, George Woolery, and Ed Buchman. Thanks, all!* ■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ANIMATION PUBLICATION COORDINATOR

Gene Day

(Continued from page 11)

erence material, and I just set up a little recording studio for myself in one of the rooms. I'm having a *lot* of fun with that, eh?" Gene played guitar, loved the Stones, but was lately exploring electronic music, composing, playing, and recording strange stuff with the second-hand synthesizers he'd recently gotten a great deal on. Last time I talked to him, a Canadian film group had approached him to do the soundtrack for an independent feature. He was looking forward to it, he said, even as he was looking forward to *The Batman* and all the other great things arrayed like wonder before us.

But these phone calls, although certainly enjoyable and illuminating, were the least of it, meeting in the mere flesh by proxy. In the end it was our work together which constituted the most salient meeting of our minds.

It it's true that the subconscious of writers and artists—the id, the truest and deepest yearnings and feelings of the mind and soul—is revealed only in our work, on levels unspoken and largely subliminal, then Gene and I must have known each other in a way transcending all other ways. The working relationship we had—in isolation, each dealing with nothing but the other's pictures or words—was a far clearer and sharper mind-link than anything short of ESP.

Separated by vast distance but united in conterminous purpose, we soared. The work was all, forming a meld more intimate than any two people had a reasonable right to expect. It out through all the stumbling bullshit often masqued as lifelong friendship, obviating the need for shared triumphs on diamond and gridiron, for the mutual *angst* of simultaneous puberty, matching hats and gowns, juvenile adventures braved in tandem, beer blasts and dope tokes and first sex, matching caps and gowns yet again. . .

It out through *all* of that and more, flashing straight to the heart of the matter—which is, of course, the heart itself.

This is only possible, I think, through the ethereal process known as creative collaboration, a mysterious alchemy of blood, sweat and brain fluids. It's sometimes called synergy—a word describing a whole greater than the sum of its individual parts—but I prefer calling it magic.

Magic, because of its ineffable and evanescent sweetness, its capacity for self-astonishment, its cardinally elusive nature, its absolute purity and rarity. In the past 12 or 13 years I've collaborated with perhaps more artists than any other writer in comics. It has worked, *really* worked, with probably fewer than 10 of those artists. . . and never more consistently than with Gene Day.

Working with Gene was a process both simple and logical, and therein lay the crucial elegance of its success. The only sacrifice was that of individual ego, and it was a burden lessened by the sharing, rendered insignificant by the final result.

Gene always—*always*—made certain the story came first. And by "story" I emphatically do not mean the inviolable preciousness of my individual words strung in sequence; I mean the synergy comprised of words and images blended in harmony. Gene *thought* about the stories; each one was far more than a random aggregate of pages representing his next paycheck. Everything he did on *Master of Kung Fu* derived *from* the story and was designed to *engineer the workings* of the story. All this, mind you, while juggling extremely complex layouts, fashioning them to be so easily assimilated by the reader that there *was never* any confusion—and so that while the *effect* of what he was doing was always clearly conveyed, the mechanics *behind* each effect were often artfully invisible. For once, the vistas of my mind's eye were accurately and breathtakingly conjured into existence by the hands of another. And for this alone he earned my awe and appreciation.

But there was more. The incredible, painstaking *detail* in almost every panel. Those ornate double-spreads which made other inkers blanch in mere contemplation of tracing them. The sustained drive straight through to the final page, the final image—no tremendous build-ups with fizzled endings when Gene was at the board; he busted his chops and paid off every time. And not once did he sacrifice so much as a *tiny* story point for the sake of showing off self-indulgent sequences or single pictures other artists might want to draw "more than what was in the plot." Believe me, this utter and uncomplaining selflessness, this devotion to higher integrity, is almost unknown in the comics field as it exists today. And, of course, it was precisely Gene's punctilious respect for my plots which only made me respect his art all the more. Gene *added* to the story (not to the *art*—to the *story*), and he *never* detracted. Just as his art fed on my plot, my dialogue fed on his art. Synergy. Magic. I cannot begin to convey the wonder of it all, the startled glee, happening before us like clockwork. . .

Gene Day's layouts from his last complete job for Marvel, *Star Wars* #69, to be inked by Tom Palmer and Rick Bryant.

ART © 1982 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

Not a single artist, Gene was a creature of bizarre drawing habits—a gonzo session of 42 hours at the board, then collapse, then up for another 28 hours and collapse again. Lopsided cycles. Cigarettes and coffee every waking moment. A bad back from the artist's perpetual hunch. No exercise.

I'd done the same trip myself for two years while living in Manhattan, before waking up in the country and wondering what kind of crazy nonsense had possessed me. What in the name of hell or heaven did I think I was doing? The answer was nothing, consciously—simply surrendering to that overwhelming, all-consuming drive which can seize any writer or artist careless enough to leave himself open to the lunge of seductive demons. It is addiction, plain and simple, and I still consider myself almost miraculously lucky to have been able to break the habit and continue plying my craft, now, in somewhat sane moderation, and with at least passing nods to my health.

I tried to tell Gene, from experience, that he'd damn well better knock it off, that I was having too much fun to endure seeing him burn out. His reply: "Geez, Doug, I *gotta* put in these hours at the board—just to meet my bills, eh?"

And new artists, even as we spoke, were being hired *to start* at 20 dollars per page more than Gene was making after years of "loyal service."

* * *

And so, at five o'clock in the morning on the twenty-third of September, after serving his time well, Gene Day died. Passed away in his sleep, leaving his wife Gail and his brother Dan, both of them loved and loving.

But since I'm no different from any other man who has mourned, and since there is no choice but to wrestle some small meaning or greater purpose from it all, I still prefer calling it magic. The magic of something more. In the end, I'd like to think of Gene as the eternal Dweller by the Dark Stream who simply failed to wake up one day.

I hope he's drifting, now, and dreaming. . . with even brighter stars in his eyes.

—Doug Moench

Special Preview:

ELFQUEST BOOK 2

A Special Look at the New Collection

A check of any local comics shop would reveal a new wave of products bearing the *Elfquest* logo. Just out from Berkley/Ace/Playboy/Pyramid is the novelization of the first five issues of the *Elfquest* comic. Co-written by Richard and Wendy Pini, the long-awaited novel has also been released in a 3000 copy limited hardcover edition. The hardcover premiered at the World Science Fiction convention in September and the 70,000 copies of the paperback should be in bookstores everywhere.

Also out now, is issue 14 of the comic, which continues the adventures of the Elves with their ancestors. The comic has only six issues to go before wrapping up the story in 1984, about a year before the Nelvana animated film is scheduled to be finished.

Finally, *Elfquest Book 2* is now out from Starblaze Books, a division of the Donning Company. Last year, Starblaze released the first book, containing the color adventures of the group from issues one through five. The new volume goes from six through 10 and marks an improvement in color reproduction.

When the first volume was developed, there wasn't enough time for Wendy Pini to color all five stories herself so she enlisted the aid of Glynis Wein, recognized by most as one of the best comic book colorists in the business. As Wendy worked on issues one, four and five in Poughkeepsie, Wein colored the middle two chapters in Manhattan.

ALL ART © 1983 WARP GRAPHICS

The art here and following are all from Issue 10, concluding *Elfquest Book 2*. Coloring the book took Wendy Pini and Jane Fancher several months.

WOOP!
UNDER AND OVER —
JUST LIKE A LONG TAILED TREE-WHEE!
THAT, CUB!
MAYBE THAT'S FUN
I LIKE THE WOODS
TEACH ME HOW TO BE A TREE-WALKER, SKYWISE!
I WANT TO DO IT TOO!

EVEN AS SHE CRIES ALOUD HER LIFEMATE'S SECRET SOUL NAME, LEETAH SEES SKYWISE, AND
OH BELOVED FORGIVE ME!
"S ALL RIGHT LEETAH...
SKYWISE KNOWS MY SOUL NAME
OF COURSE! BROTHERS IN ALL BUT BLOOD!
I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED!
TROLL WARTS AND LIZARD SKINS, LEETAH! MY ARMY CAN WAIT!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!!
THE SINGLE, SIMPLE QUESTION RELEASES A FLOOD OF EXCITED AND CONFUSED ANSWERS!
IT IS THE SWEETEST MUSIC CUTTER HAS EVER HEARD!
THE SHATTER OF DEADLY SILENCE! THE NIGHT AND FEAR! A MOMENT'S HESITANCE! THE SIGHT OF WIDE EYES FLUSHED FACES — AND THE HUNGER OF A PERILOUS JOURNEY DISSOLVES IN PEALS OF JOYOUS LAUGHTER

CUTTER!
HEY!
HE RUNS, AS THE LIFE MAGICOIL WERE SAVAGE AT HIS HEELS.
HEAT.
A WALL OF FIRE
SENSE AT HIS COMMAND.
I... I DON'T BELIEVE RETALIATING IS ALLOWED...
FAINTLY, FROM THE TANGLED DARKNESS AHEAD COMES A FALTERING, UNSKILLED RESPONSE!

SCOUTER SAID HE THOUGHT SHE SAW WINGED RIDERS ON THE PURPLE MOUNTAINS...
THAT WAS BEFORE!
I ONLY KNOW THAT OUR TWINS ARE GONE!
GONE
TO THE LAIR OF THE BIRD SPIRITS!
HE WANTED TO GO TO THE BLUE MOUNTAIN..
NOW WE HAVE VISION

NO!!
FATHER, DIDN'T YOU BELIEVE ME?
DON'T YOU EVEN BELIEVE SAVAN?
I TRIED TO GIVE YOU HER WARNING!
PLEASE! YOU MUSTN'T GO NEAR THAT MOUNTAIN!

Elfquest has gained its following because of its strong story-sense and impressive art.

"I think, considering everything," Wendy says from her studio, "Glynis did a fantastic job. We couldn't get together that often, we were working mostly by phone. The amazing thing was, she got all the colors right.

"To be honest, I was not entirely happy with the final results. For some reason, a problem none of us knew about, there was too much red in the book. Although we originally had some lovely pink shades, they turned out as reds. In fact, we got letters from some readers asking why we used so much red."

Wendy also encountered another unforseen problem: the paper the color guides were made on. The original art was reproduced on xerox paper which was then colored with Dr. Martin dyes, the same used for regular comic books. A film, undetected by everyone, covered the coloring and when reproduced in the book, all the word balloons took on a gray hue. At the printer's, work had to be done on every page to remove as much of the gray as possible.

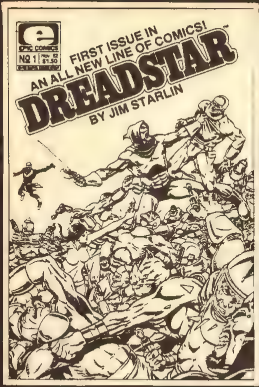
Once Wendy and her editors, Hank Stine and Kay Reynolds, saw the finished volume, they were able to learn from the various problems that cropped up. When work began on the second volue, they knew what to avoid. First, they provided Wendy with high quality stats on heavy white paper to prevent the chemical film problem

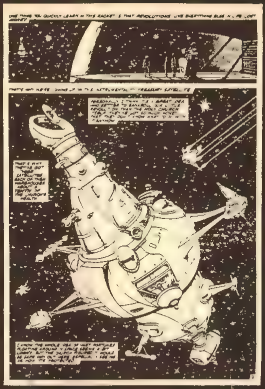
"Glynis used essentially comic book hues which I thought were marvelous," Wendy insists, "but which translated—because of that problem—to something sort of garish. I was using the comic book hues too."

So when Wendy set to work on the second volume, she chose to work with "grays, much more naturalistic colors. I have always pictured *Elfquest* as being in the forest and that's what we see. I think it's a vast improvement. We were concentrating on colors that would not glare out at the reader."

The aforementioned "we" translates to Wendy and her new assistant Jane Fancher. Fancher, president of the *Elfquest Fan Club*, moved to Poughkeepsie earlier this year and works with both Richard and Wendy on the various aspects of the elfpire. "She's essentially become a Jill-of-all trades, we kind of share her talents," Wendy says.

The Pinis are five years into a projected eight year production schedule on *Elfquest*. The comic comes out three times a year and has grown to giant proportions including a print run hovering around 70,000. That figure is comparable to most direct sales figures from DC and Marvel and represents how much they have grown with the market. (see page 49). "I do the black and white art," Wendy explains, "so it can stand by itself. I'm very conscious about that. However, I think all *Elfquest* fans agree the book has always belonged in color. We can do things with the color—add another layer to the story, use it for foreshadowing or convey a mood. The ultimate thing for *Elfquest* of course, is the movie." ■





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The Ultimate Team Player

A look at the career and art of George Perez

By ROBERT GREENBERGER

Every team has its rookie of the year and its most valuable player but if you were to ask the Teens Titans, Avengers, Fantastic Four and Justice League of America who their ultimate teammate was, the answer would no doubt be George Perez.

Since he came onto the comics scene in 1973, Perez has become one of the most popular and influential artists working today. He has helped redefine the way team comics are handled and has brought back some of the energy and excitement missing from the comics since Jack Kirby left the mainstream several years back.

Noted today for his two and a half years on DC's *New Teen Titans*, Perez has been handling almost unbelievable amounts of work including, in just the past year, numerous covers, 12 issues of the *Titans*, the *Titans* annual, the four-issue *Titans* mini-series, character designs, and two 48 page comics for Atari. We caught him inbetween jobs and he visited our offices on his way to drop off two *Titans* and one *JLA* cover at DC. He was relaxed and happy about his current life and brimming with enthusiasm for what's coming next.

As the conversation began, he easily went through the struggles to learn his craft without benefit of art courses and his entry into the comics field. But, he said a little later, "The *Titans* was the thing that resuscitated my career." To Perez, it was a lucky break coming after a very turbulent period in his life.

LIFE IN THE BRONX

"Ah yes, the South Bronx," Perez began about his early years. "I've been drawing since I was five years old. I was not really much for sports and I've always had a lot of imagination. I was reading when I was very young, before I went to school. Comics helped, my mother helped me read through the Dick and Jane books. Reading comics was an outlet for me."

Perez was immediately drawn to the sheer power of Superman. Curt Swan's style caught Perez's attention and became his first major influence and as Perez read comics, he kept drawing—his own creations and interpretations of the DC heroes. By his teens, Perez discovered the Marvel universe and was quickly drawn to Kirby's work.

PHOTO: JOHN CLAYTON

George Perez, when he visited the COMICS SCENE offices in August.

Being in Cardinal Hayes Memorial High School, Perez was deprived of any real art training but continued to develop his work through imitation of already-established styles. "Starting from Swan, I went through a Kirby period and even Steve Ditko—for very briefly, I just loved the way Ditko did hands—then others that followed

were Steranko, Neal Adams, Barry Smith, Gil Kane, Mort Drucker and many others. Norman Rockwell, Maxwell Parish, Alfonse Mouka as far as illustrators go. As far as someone whose style totally changed mine, Jim Starlin. I have developed an amalgam of styles," Perez said.

It wasn't until an active fan named Tom Sciacca convinced Perez to try comic conventions that the idea of working in the field occured to him. He received his first professional criticism at a *Star Trek* convention. Also helping with criticism was Sal Quartuccio, now known for his line of posters and portfolios. "It was Quartuccio," Perez explained, "who gave Tom and me our first chance to do our first fanzine."

In 1973, Perez joined Rich Buckler as an assistant but the relationship didn't last long. First, the two styles didn't mesh terribly well, nor did the personalities, especially with Perez trying to hold down a Bank Teller's job. After six months the two stopped working together but by then the people at Marvel were familiar with Perez and he began to get some solo work. To this day, Perez refers to a Gulliver Jones story from *Monsters Unleashed* #3 as his poorest work. Originally Buckler was to help him out but he didn't have time, so Perez, still pretty much a novice, went solo.

AND THEN CAME MAN-WOLF

"When Marvel got a hole in their schedule—they suddenly had no one to draw a feature that no one wanted to draw anyway—they gave it to me," Perez said with a smile. *Man-Wolf* was running in *Creatures on the Loose* and selling only marginally, but when Perez began working with writer David Anthony Kraft, the title's popularity grew to where it seconded only *Tomb of Dracula* in sales among the horror titles.

Around that time Perez was also assigned *Sons of the Tiger*, another feature few had an interest in. Teaming with then-neowriter Bill Mantlo, the feature became popular, eventually, more popular than Shang Chi himself in *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*.

"It was my desire to please and my desire to learn,"Perez commented, "One thing I had going for me," he added, "was a natural story-telling ability which seemed to transcend most of the flaws in drawing, of which there were many. I just improved very quickly."

Marvel noticed the young talent's improvements and found more for him to do which brought him around the offices often. "I was constantly keeping my ears open, and letting go of my ego which was my biggest stumbling block, listening to advice from John Romita and people who have been in the business a long time, and I've got to respect, and I finally started learning," Perez said.

Story BILL MANTLO Art

Perez's first published work, from *Deadly Hands of Kung-Fu*. Notice his perspective and sense of urgency.

Buckler was the regular *Fantastic Four* artist at that time and he was unable to do an annual. So Marvel "asked me if I could do it, figuring if I've worked with Rich, I've got his style—strange reasoning there." Perez did the annual and was then given the regular monthly to draw. At the same time he asked for *The Avengers*, thinking it wasn't being done right. In just a short time he was doing four features and then a phone call came—*The Inhumans* was given its own title again and the first issue was needed last week and it was Perez's assignment.

Something had to give. Perez gave up *Man-Wolf* which ended up being the last issue anyway. He had one two-part story left and put it aside, unfinished. Later, Marvel felt they had a use for it and Perez had to finish the story, two years later. "I had to be careful not to have too drastic a change in art style—constantly looked back at what I had done previously," he explained.

"It felt great doing all these books but I think it might have been too much for any one person to take on. The work was eventually suffering and my personal life went to pot. The work just occupied too much of my time. Eventually, one book gets dropped and then another book gets dropped and another then you start missing issues. Like many young artists and a number of older artists, you have to be careful not to let the art become the

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ART: © 1982 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

Perez replaced his former partner, Rich Buckler, on the *Fantastic Four* for a run of issues.

beginning and the end of your life."

It got so bad for Perez that people in the industry began to talk. At one party Al Milgrom approached and asked if the rumors were true: that Perez was quitting comics. Perez then had to stop and think. "It took a bit of self-evaluation, a divorce regrettably, and a bit of soul searching to get back on an even keel. Truthfully, I believe, and I don't pass any bad light on Marvel, I had a wonderful time." But when it came time to renegotiate Perez's contract, Marvel chose not to renew and Perez didn't argue. He was too unreliable on any of his assigned books to be worth the investment.

ENTER THE NEW TEEN TITANS

Marv Wolfman, who had befriended Perez while they were at Marvel was at DC. In 1979 and Perez was freelancing. Wolfman asked if Perez wanted to do anything at DC. "I said the one thing I wanted to do is the *Justice League*, one crack which I figured was all I would get. He said yes but the one thing he was interested in was a new revival of the *Teen Titans*. After a few minutes of hearty laughter, I said OK strictly because I wanted to do a *JLA* story. I didn't think the *Titans* had a snowball's chance in hell of succeeding," Perez said, laughing.

Perez thought committing himself to five issues wouldn't be such a bad thing to do and he'd get his shot at the *JLA* and that would be that. "I became more into it when I realized that we were designing new characters," Perez began, "And Marv, Len and I went into the office and started talking out new characters and asking about my ideas and I started giving them designs. I designed all the characters once each and they were all accepted which was very surprising to me—I hate designing more than once if I can afford it."

While all the work was proceeding in the Spring of 1980, Dick Dillin, longtime *JLA* penciller, passed away. Paul Levitz called and offered the penciller's slot to Perez who eagerly accepted. For about a year or so he tried to do both titles regularly but had to give up the *JLA* because of his commitments to the *TT* but at least he was around for the gala 200th issues.

With the sudden *JLA* assignment and the idea for the preview issue—inserted into *DC Comics Presents* #25—Perez was falling behind on the schedule, so Curt Swan was asked to do issue five as a fill-in. "It was very surprising," Perez remembered, "Curt being one of my earliest influences was trying to copy my style. It had the continuity intact and credit has to go to Romeo Tanghal who inked that and corrected any of the inconsistencies that Curt may have had."

As the work progressed, both Wolfman and Perez realized the title was going to be something special. Perez explained it as being "almost like the sense of family they have developed into. There was a lot of friction between them, which I guess is natural since they were all strangers. Issue eight was the turning point, where everyone has a nice little story, a social life as well. Starfire took hold, giving her the role of a model."

Perez stopped to laugh and then admitted that Starfire was created as the group's sex symbol. "When the book developed a fan following and we knew the characters meant something to these people. We knew Starfire couldn't just remain a bubblehead, she has to have a character of her own which Marv developed wonderfully."

As fans may have noticed, Perez has a fondness for drawing women. As he puts it, he enjoys drawing "healthy" women, but over the years he has refined his drawing style and "the women have thinned out finally, because they were too thunder-thighed in the beginning. Starfire is the most *zaftig* of the group. Wonder Girl is very attractive, she has a starlet's figure; she is perfectly assembled. I find her the most alluring, most satisfying woman in the lot. She is the one Titan I would most like to meet.

"Raven has developed, recently, a dancer's body in which her breasts have gotten smaller. I gave Raven a body based on a young lady, Fran McGregor, who's built with a very attractive dancer's body. She also is the same school as my wife, Carol.

"Lately I have been making the characters look more like people I'm basing them on. Changeling, for example, has become Mickey Rooney; his face is very young now."

The *Titans*, being the longest series Perez has worked on, has proven to be a pure joy to work on. He finds himself refusing other work so it wouldn't interfere with the *Titans* and admitted to feeling a little odd when seeing this summer's *X-Men*/*Teen Titans* crossover, illustrated by Walt Simonson and Terry Austin. At least he'll get his turn next year when DC produces a return match-up with Wolfman and Perez doing the story. Since Marvel

(Continued on page 38)

AVENGERS © 1982 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

Left, Perez's first *Avengers* work in issue 141 and right, his last work in issue 200. Although he tried different layouts at first, he settled down and produced some truly dynamic work towards the end. Also notice how his characters took on individual looks.

The George Pérez Notebook

INHUMANS © 1982 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

X-MEN © 1982 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

Left: Marvel asked Perez to add *The Inhumans* to a schedule that for anyone was inhuman. Right: Perez got to draw the X-Men only once, in their third annual.

The wraparound cover to Perez, Accent on the first E, published in 1977 by Omnibus Publisher. Note the use
Perez has recently passed up in favor of dyes.

of colored markers, something
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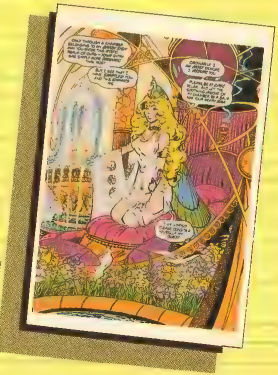
TEEN TITANS © 1982 DC COMICS INC

JUSTICE LEAGUE © 1982 DC COMICS INC

Two looks at Perez's *Teen Titans*. Above is a page from the landmark issue eight when the book took on a character of its own. Cyborg, by the way, is a personal favorite of Perez's. Below a look at seven individuals from issue 26.

Above is a page from *Justice League of America* #200, the title Perez went to DC to try his hand at. Below is a page from Atari's *SwordQuest* #1, the first comic to be designed with the game at the same time.



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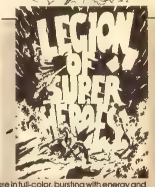

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printed the story in their new 48 page, Baxter package, Perez would like to go that one better by going for full-process color on the interiors, allowing for a greater diversity in the colors available.

"I'm glad they gave me warning about full-process covers on the annuals," Perez said. "A lot of artists had already done their line drawings without illustrating it for full-process color. When they told me, I said 'All right, I'm going to color it myself so then I can draw everything four-color.' They were afraid that it would not reproduce, they feared my cover the most, but they then said it was probably the best annual cover they had. It reproduced exactly the way I thought it would."

IMPROVING THE ART

With a smile, Perez paused a moment in thought and then continued, "My entire career has been based on hit and miss, since I've never been trained at anything. I'm learning as I go along. When I started inking, I was using markers and now I've gotten into quills and rapidographs which I'm comfortable with, because my hand is too unsteady with a brush. Despite my fine detail, I can't control a brush that well, I like to feel the paper give. I'm going to learn coloring and painting the same way. Lately I have been doing more half-painting/half-line work like when Neal Adams started painting. I did that for the *Titans* annual and I just did two T-shirts for Atari that was line work and a lot of color, particularly one which was all gray stonework, so I had to use six different shades of gray and mix it in with brown, so I've been experimenting with more mixed media."

Perez has been using his *Titans* and *JLA* cover assignments as an opportunity to develop his inking and get the fine work he feels essential to his true art style. Given a choice, Perez would prefer to be inked by Terry Austin whose style is very compatible to Perez's, "with all respect to Romeo, and I love Dick Giordano's inks on my material and Terry, who's only inked me once. I'm more into a fine chiseled look than the brush-look. Romeo has a style which is right for the *Titans* and he's the most conscientious of inkers. When I went to full pencils recently, most of the reservations I had about Romeo had disappeared."

All along, Perez had been doing only breakdowns on his work but what was a breakdown to Perez was finished work to most pencillers. With these breakdowns, Tanghal felt free to interpret Perez's work and at first this led to some problems. Being a relatively new inker, Tanghal wasn't as adept at putting in backgrounds or adding the details that Perez felt tantamount to the finished look of the series. When

After helping revive interest in the *Doom Patrol*, Perez contributed this cover, one of many he did for DC in the last two years.

Perez mentioned his reservations to Managing Editor Dick Giordano, Tanghal sat down with Giordano and went over the problems.

"I'm now teaching him to use overlays," Perez added. "The one thing I wish he would use are zip-a-tones but there are two things wrong with that: it takes a lot of explaining to show how to use zip-a-tone and an artist pays for it himself, the man does have a family and I have to consider that fact.

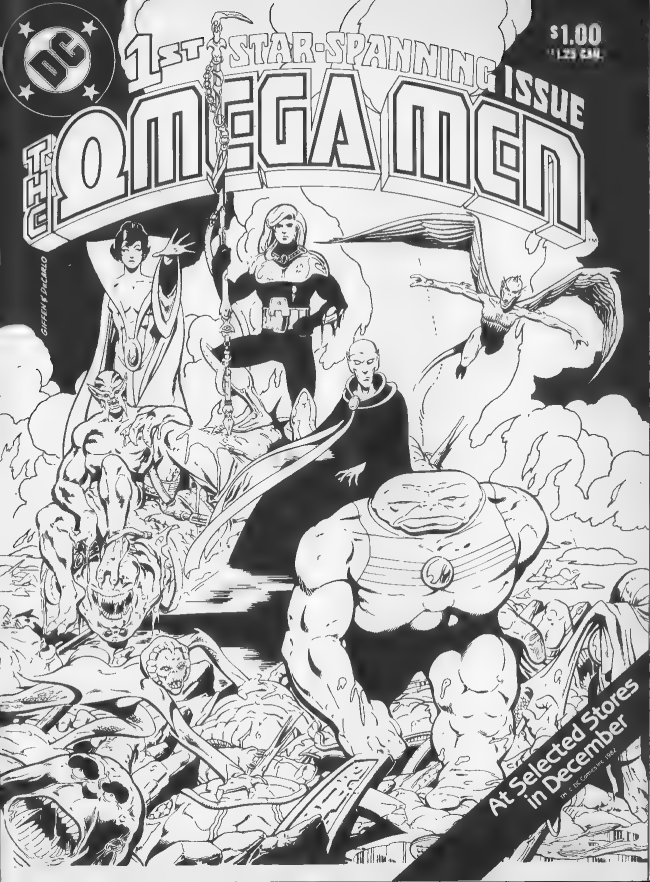
"But when I do full pencils, I control Romeo and I get Romeo at his best, and his best is considerable. Now, I'm really happy with the way the book looks." And as for his full pencils, they are very tight, very dark pencils that are reproducible. Giordano has commented to Perez that the book is looking cleaner and better than ever since the changeover, allowing Perez more total control on the art.

As much as Perez loves drawing the other DC heroes, including boyhood favorite Green Lantern, he just doesn't have time for a second series. "In the next year I have six issues of *History of the DC Universe* [to be written by Wolfman and Len Wein, tying together the frayed DC continuity], the *JLA/Avengers* crossover for next summer. I just received the word that Gerry Conway is scheduled to script it and DC is doing another *Titans/X-Men* team-up. I have two more issues of *Swordquest* to do for Atari and those will be inked by Dick Giordano and Mike DeCarlo. And I'm doing work on the anniversary issue of *Action Comics*, with Cary Bates. That in addition to the annual scheduled for next summer and the 12 issues of the *Titans*.

"The Graphic Novel we were talking about doing was originally scheduled for Christmas 1983 but with the crossover scheduled for then, I am asking that the novel be pushed back at least six months. They said fine and may wait until the Christmas of 1984. Marv won't write it if I can't draw it—he doesn't want the *Titans*' team broken up for something that big." In fact, Perez is very pleased with the team spirit the creators have found with the book. Not only have inker Tanghal and Wolfman pledged to stay on the book but colorist Adrienne Roy has stuck with the book from the start.

Perez says he isn't planning on retiring from the *Titans* until he breaks the longest run on record. Depending on who you ask, the record is 102 uninterrupted issues of *Fantastic Four* penciled by Jack Kirby or 120 of *JLA* by Dick

(Continued on page 58)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The Short Life of Sally Cruikshank

A look at the wild world of independent animation with one of today's most creative talents

By KYLE COUNTS

Everything's ducky" might well be the perfect catch phrase to describe the animated films of Sally Cruikshank. Her free-spirited short works—*Quasi at the Quackadero*, *Make Me Psychic* and the lesser known *Chow Fun*, *Fun on Mars* and *Ducky*—are a celebration of "funny animal" goofiness, showcasing the misadventures of nebulous duck personalities who live in a world bursting with '30s rhythms: dancing furniture, Art Deco Hollywood parties, and amusement parks that blend elements of underground comix with Lewis Carroll.

Cruikshank's off-the-wall cartoons have amassed a following that extends from film festivals as far apart as Ann Arbor and Zagreb. They have been screened at the New York Museum of Modern Art and have opened for such recent theatrical releases as *Airplane!* and *Altered States*. Steve Martin even borrowed a clip from *Quasi at the Quackadero* for his last TV special. Some of her work will turn up in Joe Dante's segment for next Easter's *Twilight Zone* movie.

Cruikshank, 33, a lithe woman with haunting eyes and an infectious grin, says of her formative years: "I was just a normal kid with private fantasies." Her fondest memories of life in Chatham, New Jersey, are of watching cartoons on television (she especially likes those by the Van Beuren Studio and the Fleischer Brothers, both obvious major stylistic influences), reading comics (*Little Lulu* and Carl Barks' *Uncle Scrooge* and *Donald Duck*, comics with "strong pictorial storylines," were her favorites), and celebrating Halloween, a day which continues to hold a special fascination for her.

After graduating from high school, Cruikshank entered Smith College to study art. While a junior there, a favorite teacher, Elliot Ofner, sent slides of her self-proclaimed cryptic drawings (colored pencils and clay reliefs on paper) to a screening committee assembled to award scholarships to stu-

Sally and her self-portrait.

The art on this page is from *Quasi at the Quackadero*, the breakthrough film that brought money, attention and fans to Sally Cruikshank. The film clip at right shows how quickly the action can move.

dents for a summer session at the prestigious Yale Summer Art School in Connecticut. Cruikshank was one of 30 students selected to attend the two month workshop.

It was at Yale Summer Art School that Cruikshank was bitten by the animation bug. Classmate Warner Wada, who opened her eyes to Robert Crumb's *Zap Comix*, suggested she try adapting her drawing style to animation. When she returned to Smith for her senior year, Cruikshank bought a copy of *Animation* by Preston Blair, a primer-level approach to the art form she found "infinitely helpful." She admittedly knew next to nothing about animation at the time.

After some additional research, Cruikshank arranged a special studies class in animation. With the aid of a simple animation stand built by instructor David Batchelder, consisting of a Bolex camera attached to a photo enlarger, she produced *Ducky*, a three-minute, 16-millimeter film that featured an early version of what would soon be her most famous duck: Quasi. Cruikshank candidly calls the film "primitive" but adds, "I think it gets by with a certain feeling of 'look at me, I'm moving!'"

Ducky took two months to make, and launched a series of Cruikshank films preoccupied with odd-looking animals and duck motifs. "My ducks are based on the ducks from Carl Barks' comics," she offers. "But I guess they got twisted in my memory, because people don't seem to see much similarity between them." While the film has all the earmarks of a first effort—paper crinkles, lighting shifts—Cruikshank's bewitching imagery overcomes its technical deficiencies: a baby's crib turns into a bear and appears to swallow the infant; then the baby's face changes from an elephant to a pig, while a duck dances on a star—literally—to the tune of "Aint We Got Fun."

Encouraged by the response to her first watercolor and paper animation effort, Cruikshank enrolled in the San Francisco Art Institute after graduating Smith to study filmmaking. As a student in avante garde filmmaker Larry Jordan's class, she made *Fun on Mars*, a 5-minute animated short (its cost: $100) which sprang from her reactions to the California lifestyle. The film's refrain, "where every night is New Year's Eve," was lifted from a postcard of the city—Cruikshank is an avid collector of postcards—which depicted people dancing in a nightclub setting.

Fun on Mars utilizes many different techniques: watercolors, crayons, markers on paper, cut-outs and collage—Cruikshank's way(s) of easing the "staggering" workload of required drawings. Once again, ducks are the featured players in the film. We see them surfing, riding bikes and slipping down slides, as well as performing in a Busby Berkeley kaleidoscope of spinning ducks. The 1971 film opens with a duck astronaut on the moon, an idea Cruikshank got by creatively erasing a newspaper photo of an actual astronaut, and a procedure she has since utilized on photos of John Travolta and Wayne Newton, with hilarious effect.

Using a grant of $400 secured in association with PBS, Cruikshank created *Chow Fun* (1972), her most complex short film to date, with a higher ratio of drawings than the others, giving it a smoother momentum. Mixing paper animation with figures cut and glued on animation cels, the film sways with dancing flowers, toy factory assemblylines and carnival milieus. "I was specifically trying to capture that cozy feeling of motion from the early '30s cartoons, where everything is bouncing around," recalls Cruikshank.

Chow Fun was edited on a movieola at Snazelle Films in San Francisco, a commercial house which also rented space and equipment to aspiring filmmakers. An employee suggested she show the film to company president Greg Snazelle, which she did. "A week later he offered me this extraordinary job," Cruikshank relates. "To experiment in animation and do TV

commercials when there was work." By the end of the summer of 1972, Cruikshank had joined Snazelle as head animator, a position she has held to this day.

With Snazelle's support, she set her sights on developing a longer and more ambitious project that would come to be known as *Quasi at the Quakadero* (1975). (Some working titles included: *I Walked with a Duck, Hold That Quasi* and *Quasi Quacks Up.*) Shot in 35mm at a cost of $6,000—most of which went for cel painting, sound recording and lab and camera work—the 10-minute film took two years to draw, and another four-plus months for photography and post-production. There were 100 watercolor backgrounds and some 5000 cels. Cartoonist-boyfriend Kim Deitch did a large share of the inking (dip pen and some rapidograph) plus some "in-betweening" (transitional drawings) while Kathryn Lenihan handled the bulk of the cel painting. All remaining responsibilities were Cruikshank's: design, animation, direction, story and coordination of soundtrack and music.

"There wasn't much of a script for *Quasi*," she admits. "I storyboarded it first, using ideas and conceptual materials taken from sketchbooks I'd compiled over the years. The storyboards concentrate on narrative. When I lay out the shots is when the crazy stuff comes. It's mostly impromptu as I start designing the scene."

With the exception of Rollo, a "robot

slave," the characters in *Quasi* are all ducks, albeit ducks with a trace of alligator in their family tree. Anita, an '80s-style Betty Boop with a New Wave wardrobe, towers over the pudgy Quasi, an infantile duck with two buck front teeth, thick glasses and a red cape. (Cruikshank herself provides Anita's Mae Westian dialect, while Kim Deitch vocalizes Quasi.) The relationship between the ducky-duo is delightfully ambiguous, underscored by put-downs and practical jokes.

The story is set in the Quackadero, a trendy Coney Island of the future with attractions that owe more to George Orwell than Walt Disney: the Hall of Time Mirrors, where Anita, Rollo and Quasi see themselves as they will look in "Old Age" and "100 Years from now" (Quasi is shown dancing the Mashed Potato to his skeletal reflection in the latter); The Roll Back Time Machine (Rollo watches a skyscraper shrink and curl up into the ground) and the Think-O-Blink Machine, a telepathic device that reproduces a painted picture of the customer's thoughts (an assistant faints when Quasi's is revealed: Anita and Rollo roped to two cupcakes resting on a giant Quasi's tongue).

There is also "Your Shining Moment," a sideshow act presented like a gameshow, wherein a robot barker "probes the past" of a very embarrassed captive guest; and Madame Xano's, where ticket-buyers may see "last night's dreams"—one fellow actually relives a group of vegetables sit-

Clips from *Make Me Psychic*, the $14,000 follow-up to *Quasi*. The two clips at right show how much detail she adds to each scene.

ting at a dinner table, preparing to dine on Adam and Eve under glass!

Our trio end their day at the "Time Holes!" exhibit, where a large sign marked "Do Not Lean Over Railing" catches Anita's mischievous eye. She quickly entices Quasi to the railing's edge with his "fa-vo-wit" gastronomical delight, chocolate cake, only to have Rollo push him over into the three million years B.C. display, where Anita warns, he will be stranded forever—or at least until the next cartoon.

Quasi at the Quackadero quickly established Cruikshank, winning numerous awards and having a showing at the Los Angeles Film Exposition. Animation scholar Leonard Maltin pronounced it "One of the most bizarre animated films I've ever seen," a comment Cruikshank takes as a definite compliment.

The film had its first theatrical booking at the Northside Theater in Berkeley, California, just up the hill from Cruikshank's apartment on the University of California campus. "It was really a thrill, having *Quasi* open in my neighborhood theater," she says. "In fact, there was one weekend when I had films playing in *three* theaters in Berkeley." Her films, currently distributed by Serious Business Company and Barbary Coast Releasing, have returned a profit from theatrical rentals, a rarity for short films.

Quasi was followed by *Make me Psychic* (1978, eight minutes; 35 mm), reteaming Anita and Quasi and adding a new character: a "head waiter type" named Snozzy. In the film, Anita buys a mesmerama at a novelty shop (the short was originally titled *Mesmeroid Madness*), a gizmo guaranteed to "release your inner powers." She tries it out at home, and later, at Snozzy's outlandish party, finds herself able to levitate appetizers and drinks into her mouth, not to mention telekinetically pick Snozzy's wallet pocket when he swoops her into his arms for a dance.

Cruikshank concludes the festivities by once again tapping the nerve of childhood behavioral tics. When Quasi yanks away a chair Anita is about to sit in, sending the guests into hysterical fits of laughter, Anita puts the psychic whammy on the yuksters, sending them flying about the house in a flurry of contortions (Any similarities to *Carrie* are purely coincidental, Cruikshank insists, as she didn't see the DePalma thriller until much later.) A punctured waterbed literally pours the party out the window. But wait! The next shot is of Anita, splashing into consciousness in her overflowing bathtub. It was only a "Dweam." Or was it?

Make Me Psychic cost $14,000, and was like *Quasi*, independently financed by Cruikshank. The dramatic budget increase was due to the hiring of additional cel painters, more animation and skyrocketing lab fees. If the film looks a little slicker then *Quasi*, it's because, according to Cruikshank: "People didn't know what to make of *Quasi*. It was pretty hard to absorb in one sitting, cold. So, I thought I would try directing the eye more, by simplifying things and giving the next film a clearer focus."

How does Cruikshank structure the awesome work requirements for one of her shorts? First, she designs her scenes in storyboard form. "I picture the shot as if it was a movie: what happens, and any dialogue a character might speak. I do a lot of little drawings to get ideas for the story, and it evolves from there. I tried writing the story in treatment form, but found that storyboards worked better."

She purposely keeps dialogue to a minimum because of the complicated nature of syncing and "the hassle of getting people into the studio." Once all dialogue is recorded on tape in a sound studio, the recording is used to break down each word into syllables for an "X-sheet"—or exposure sheet—with each syllable corresponding to a particular frame of movement. As animator, she uses these X-sheets to determine the number of feet of drawings—which will be rendered in a non-photographable blue pencil—required for a given sequence. She uses a stop watch and the 24-frames a second, two-frames-a-drawing formula to time each sequence. Then be-

gins the arduous task of layout based on her storyboards, for which she draws upon sketchbooks and old architecture magazines.

She shoots her own pencil tests in order to keep watch on how the motion is working ("It rarely does," she groans), but forgoes the use of Xeroxing, a process which has replaced inking in the paper animation studios by transferring the pencil drawings directly to an animation cel. She feels Xeroxing "draws attention to the fact that it's a drawing and not a separate reality."

Inking is started midway through the drawing stage. Next, the cel painter(s) receives the inked cels with model sheets of the characters, based on Cruikshank's choice of color schemes, and goes to work applying vinyl colors to her specifications. Cruikshank does all the background paintings herself.

Finally, a camera service shoots the completed cels and sends back a work print for inspection and any corrections. She prefers to wait until the end of production for the final camera.

The zippy musical score for *Quasi and Make Me Psychic* was composed and performed by a now defunct Berkeley band called the Cheap Suit Serenaders—which, early on, featured Robert Crumb on banjo and vocals. Members Al Dodge and Bob Armstrong "caught the rhythms of the film beautifully," in Cruikshank's opinion, using a combination of a slide flute, xylophone, ukelele, duck call, boat whistle and bag-pipe for the soundtrack to create the "strange, gallopy feeling" Cruikshank, a devoted fan of '20s and '30s white dance band music, was looking for.

Commenting on the demise of the theatrical animated short, Cruikshank says: "I think the animated short is the best format for animation. You can be really crazy and your characters don't have to be completely likeable or work on your emotions all the time like they do in a feature. But there's just no market for the short anymore. The money I made back on *Quasi* and *Psychic* doesn't begin to take into account my own time spent on them."

Her only commerical alternative, she feels, is to attempt a feature. To that end, she won a $10,000 grant from the National Endowment For the Arts to create in 1980 a storyboard and three-minute sample reel for a proposed "animated musical comedy extravaganza" called *Quasi's Cabaret*, about "three hedonistic ducks who try to open the ultimate tropical nightclub."

The sample reel unfurls like a hyped-up preview of coming attractions, with Kim Deitch's announcer intoning: "Experience the ultimate in tropical pleasure and excitement"—"Electric! Exotic! A Wonderland you won't want to leave!" over quick cuts showing Snozzy, Anita and Quasi in action. The last shots are of a properlooking Anita, attired in a smart Joan Crawford suit, jawing the final pitch: "I hope you will con-si-duh pwo-docing *Quasi's Cabaret.*"

Alas, at a projected cost of eight million, no able-bodied producer has taken Anita up on her offer. They claim to like Cruikshank's work, but see it as lacking in commercial potential. When she approached Disney, they told her they would have to "thoroughly redesign" her caracters.

Cruikshank has spent much of the past year or so on "idea work," developing two feature projects, both combining live action with animation. One is set in a mental institution, written specifically for a comedian as star, and the other is called *Joystick*, a "sort of humorous horror story" about the effects of computer animation on an artist she modelled on herself. *Joystick* has been optioned by BBZ Films of Venice, California.

She is also attempting to market a series of three-minute shorts for cable, called *Weird Airways* and featuring Snozzy as the owner-pilot of a character airline, with Anita on board as a "bag-lady stewardess," as Cruikshank describes it. Thus far, the money for the shorts has not materialized, leading her to refer to cable as "a banana on a string to filmmakers."

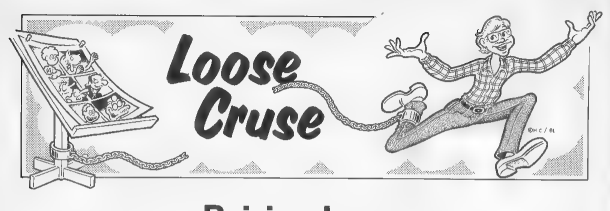
On Disney and animation, Cruikshank offers: "In the new Disney book by Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, they're constantly apologizing for their early animation, which they call 'rubber hose' animation, and that's the kind I like! I'm not that fond of Disney, all through the years. I'm really impressed by what they've done, and awestruck by things like *Pinocchio*—it's extraordinarily good—but there's something in Disney's basic taste or aesthetic that puts me off. Some of the early stuff strikes me as rather vicious, and the latter films are too sweet. With the exception of Donald Duck, the sense of humor never hits a personal note.

"When I read in the book about how much rotoscoping reference was done in Disney's films, I was amazed. I think that has ultimately led them down the wrong path to naturalistic stories, when what animation does best comes out of the imagination. They're putting animals back in the meadows and giving them these anthropomorphic emotions, which is getting away from the 'funny animal' tradition. I think that's too bad."

Cruikshank generally prefers the New York brand of animation: the aforementioned Fleischer Brothers and Van Beuren Studio (she regularly shows "Makin' A Move" and "By The Silvery Moon" in personal appearances) and—though not from the New York school—early Bob Clampett. "They didn't seem to be as concerned with their audiences," she relates, "whether or not their cartoons would influence kids to stick their fingers in a light socket. They had a feeling of proceeding directly from the imagination. With Disney, you always got the feeling that he was holding back."

Assessing her own style, Cruikshank says: "I think I have a different concept of motion than most animators. One thing that bothers me about so many contemporary animators is that they've learned a language from other animators. You see the same hand movements, the same 'blink' 'blink' 'blink' when a character asks a question. Too many animators don't try to picture the dynamics of movement, to use it creatively. I'm not that great an animator per se, but I do think I have a sense of motion that makes for an offbeat view of the world."

There is hope that someday a sympathetic progressive producer will come forth to introduce American audiences to the uplifting pleasures of Sally Cruikshank's inspired vision of animation. That an artist who admits to being obsessed with the past might influence a future generaton to think of animation in new terms is ironic indeed. ■



Raising Issues

By HOWARD CRUSE

Was it parody? Or piracy? If it was parody, had the parodists gone too far?

"Copyright infringement" was what Disney called it. Not Disney the man; he'd been gone since 1966. I'm talking about Walt Disney Productions as represented by its lawyers and executives, the folks who brought us one of the more interesting lawsuits of the '70s.

Those of you who read my last column know what provoked Disney's ire. In 1971 four San Francisco-based cartoonists had begun producing underground comic books featuring famous Walt Disney characters engaging in un-Disneyish escapades involving dope, raunchy sex and general moral turpitude.

The offending cartoonists were collectively known as the Air Pirates. Individually they were Dan O'Neill, Gary Hallgren, Bobby London and Ted Richards. Ron Turner of Last Gasp was also sued for publishing the comix. The series ground to a halt after three issues under the weight of injunctions imposed by the U.S. District Court of Northern California at Disney's behest, but the Air Pirates—unfazed by WDP's demands for damages which added up to hundreds of thousands of dollars—vowed to battle Disney all the way to the Supreme Court. They claimed they'd done nothing wrong, and that Disney was attempting to suppress their Constitutional right to make political points through parody.

There's not space enough in a "Loose Cruse" column to do justice to the legal subtleties, ideological conflicts and human adventures that comprise the Air Pirates story. What you'll see me doing today is plucking a few points from the tantalizing array of relevant issues and events. My selections aren't random; I'm hoping to arrive at a clearer understanding of what's allowable when it comes to parody. Last issue I talked about why the Air Pirates did what they did; this issue I'm focusing on the questions they raised by doing it.

The cartooning community was divided in its response to the issues raised by the Air Pirates' actions and Disney's mode of retaliation. These issues had distinct moral, ethical, legal and artistic dimensions made all the spicier by colorful personalities, emotional symbols, political rhetoric and generation-gap reflexes. Detractors of the Air Pirates called the parodies outright theft; supporters either agreed with the Air Pirates' arguments or liked the underground offenders for their scrappiness under fire.

The Air Pirates insisted that their satirical comix made "fair use" of Disney's characters. Fair use exists as a legal concept because both common law and common sense have long recognized that if a culture is to grow, works of art and of science must not be so rigidly protected by copyright law that they cannot be judged, challenged, enlarged upon and even mocked by others than the original creators. The process of criticism requires a certain amount of copying, so that a reader can understand precisely what a critic is commenting upon. Usually a few words or paragraphs will do, supplemented by paraphrasing. In the case of the visual arts, portions of images or a few panels from a comic book story may be reproduced. The original creator's permission is not required for such limited copying, and it is assumed that the copying will not be so extensive that the commercial demand for the original work will be diverted by the copy.

If a creator feels that his or her original work has been copied too extensively, a lawsuit against the copier may be in order. Then a judge can decide whether the limits of fair use have indeed been exceeded. A skeletal set of guidelines for fair use were written into the 1976 Copyright Law, but judges are more concretely guided by the body of precedent that has accumulated through decades of copyright-infringement rulings. Sometimes one precedent contradicts another; judges in different districts may be of different minds, and definitive rulings by the Supreme Court in tricky areas such as parody have been rare. When particular lawyers take on particular copyright cases, they try to muster the precedents most favorable to their clients while challenging the logic behind opposing trends of thought. Gradually, as disputes have been appealed to higher courts, certain principles defining allowable fair use have been isolated. It was one of these principles—never specifically written into by legislators—that tripped up the Air Pirates.

The principle in question has arisen from efforts to balance the rights of copyright holders to control the use of their creations against the unusual needs of parody. Parody is a form of criticism which makes its point by mimicking the original, by *almost seeming to be* the original. The late John Putnam, longtime art director for *Mad*, called parody "the art of the double-take" in his deposition supporting the Air Pirates, going on to explain: "The humorous effect of parody is best achieved when at first glance the material appears convincingly to be the original, and upon close examination is discovered to be quite something else . . ."

Mr. Cruse has been given a free hand to express his thoughts and ideas in any manner he wishes within the scope of this publication. This column does not necessarily represent the editorial views of COMICS SCENE nor our philosophy. The contents is © 1982 by Howard Cruse.

To accomplish this, more is required than a few quoted sentences or reprinted panels; enough must be copied for the parody to momentarily *seem to be* the copyrighted original. This may be quite a bit of copying, perhaps too much for the taste of the copyright-holder who may yell "Foul!" Judges search for a commonsense promise have ruled that if enough is copied to "recall or conjure up" the original in a reader's mind, then parody's goal has been adequately accomplished, and that to copy beyond that point ceases to be fair use. That opinions may differ on how much is "enough" makes it tough for any parodist to be sure when he is within the law; hence timidity is promoted.

The Air Pirates felt that the idea and image of Mickey Mouse were bound together in the public's mind. To explore the mythology behind the Mouse, they needed to quote the Mouse's *exact image*. "Not a disguised mouse that needed a shave," insists Dan O'Neill. "None of that '50s stuff, none of those little changes. The real power of parody comes off the fact that it is extremely close to the original on the surface, and the internal structure of the character is 180° different."

In the 1978 ruling of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, Judge Cummings denied that Mickey's *exact image* was necessary to make the Air Pirates' point. That this was an artistic judgment being made by a non-artist is one of the troubling aspects of the ruling. The most successful proof of Disney's strategy was in keeping the focus of the case riveted on *how much* had been copied, since the similarity of the Air Pirates' mouse and Disney's was uncontested. According to Kevin W. Wheelwright, writing in the *University of San Francisco Law Review* about the earlier District Court ruling in 1975 on the Air Pirates case, the purpose and context of the copying was not sufficiently considered along with the amount. He argues that the court "merely determined whether the defendant had substantially copied the Disney cartoon characters without adequately considering the differences in mood, the difference in audiences, and the lack of commercial competition between the two works." While the Ninth Circuit subsequently softened the one-sidedness of the lower court's decision, its own ruling remains vulnerable to the same criticism. Furthermore, as King Solomon demonstrated when he proposed that the child claimed by two mothers be cut in half, compromise is not always the wisest resolution to a dispute. Even as he cited the "conjure up" principle, Judge Cummings conceded that "the constraints of the existing precedent do not permit (the Air Pirates) to take as much of a component part as they need to make the 'best parody.' "

So much for an art form! The exactly copied image is to the parodist what the perfectly formed phrase is to the poet: A scalpel which cuts with precision to the core of an idea. Parody performed with a plastic knife is doomed to mediocrity. Artists may not wish to see their important tools jettisoned by judges in the interest of compromise.

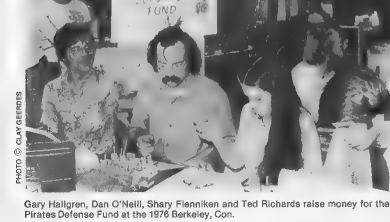
The concern shown by Walt Disney Productions over the unauthorized use of Disney characters apparently centered on more practical matters than preserving the art of parody. For example, while the prime audience for Disney products, namely children, was presumably barred from purchasing underground comix. WDP knew that a rash of unchallenged Air Pirates books could conceivably have provoked misdirected anger among parents who might think that the Disney folks were putting out such questionable items themselves. Not everyone understands the subtleties of satire.

Whether such scattered instances of confusion would have done more harm than a gnat's bite to a corporation whose 1970 assets were more than $267 million is open to question, but it didn't help the Air Pirates' case that they had put out three separate books featuring Disney characters and promised subscribers more of the same. "Our credibility was really stretched," admits Ted Richards on that point. Who knows but what *Air Pirates Funnies* might have grown into an enterprise rivalling *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* in popularity had not WDP's lawsuit nipped it in the bud? And with each successive issue, *Air Pirates Funnies* would have looked less like parodic criticism and more like the work of small-time interlopers copping a free ride to fame on the backs of Disney's original creators.

Whether or not the Air Pirates' motives were cut with an ounce or two of rationalization, the fact that there was substance to their claims of serious political intent was newly demonstrated at the eleventh hour when Dan O'Neill published "Communique #1 from the MLF" in the Spring 1979 issue of Stewart Brand's *CoEvolution Quarterly*.

It was, to put it mildly, a surprise move. By that time the Air Pirates had been trounced at every stage of their long court battle, at least on the copyright-infringement front. (The Ninth Circuit had ruled against Disney with regard to parallel complaints of trademark infringement and unfair competition.) The parodists were deeply in debt to their lawyers and Disney was poised to demand its thousands of dollars in awarded damages. Ron Turner and Gilbert Shelton had signed separate truces with WDP in 1975, but the other Air Pirates had forged ahead in hopes of a successful appeal to the Supreme Court, if need be. When the top court refused to hear their appeal early in 1979, it looked like they were down for the count, frustrated not merely by losing their case but by never even having a chance to present their First Amendment argument to a jury. They'd wanted to dramatize how their rights of free expression were being pummeled; they'd even fantasized bringing some satiric interplay into the courtroom ("We were gonna call Mickey Mouse from Disneyland as a witness," says Ted Richards mischievously). But judges kept agreeing with Disney that the crux of the matter lay in the undisputed fact that a Mouse had been copied, ear for ear, button for button.

With the Air Pirates' last appeal turned away, Walt Disney Productions might have expected pleas for mercy. What neither Disney nor anyone else expected was a repeat of the original



Gary Hallgren, Dan O'Neill, Shary Flenniken and Ted Richards raise money for the Air Pirates Defense Fund at the 1976 Berkeley, Con.

ATTENTION COLLECTORS! Missed an Issue?

BACK ISSUES

#1 Interviews with Stan Lee, Jim Shooter on Marvel, history of *Scorchy Smith*, Sy Barry on drawing the *Phantom*, Movie Hero Preview; Saturday morning superheroes, and Paul Levitz on the Triumph of Comics Fandom

#2 Jack Kirby on 40 years in comics, Joe Sinnott, Jim Starlin interviews; John Byrne on creators' rights, David and Leslie Newman on writing for the movies, Carl Barks book preview, and of course, *Judge Dredd!*

#3 Don Bluth reveals *The Secret of NIMH*, Frank Miller on comics today, Bob Layton on *Hercules*; Bill Stout on storyboarding *Conan*, Len Wein on *Swamp Thing*, Osamu Tezuka part one; Jack Katz part one; and *Dick Tracy* turns 50

#4 Marvel's creators talk about the *Conan* comics; *Conan* photo preview and merchandising news, Richard and Wendy Pini with publishing tips, Is *Legion* fandom dead? learn to letter comics; *Prince Valiant* and *Barney Google*, and Gene Colan part one

#5 Burne Hogarth's career, Batman's Jim Aparo, Inkers' Forum Part I; Moebius' new movie; Turning movies into comics; Gene Colan Part II and lots more

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offense. Yes, Dan O'Neill had drawn the Mouse again, in defiance of longstanding injunctions validated by the highest court in the land. And to make his insolence the more galling, he did it in the sharpest, funniest and most substantive Disney parody he had yet produced.

In four pages, O'Neill's "Communique" scores a surprising number of points, examining the unworkable limits that had been placed on parody, poking further fun at Disney myths, and tying up loose ends from earlier Air Pirates Mickey Mouse episodes. The "Communique" also served notice to Disney that unless they were prepared to strike an acceptable bargain with the resurgent Air Pirates, Disney's public relations department stood to be driven bananas by a newly formed invisible army: the MLF.

MLF: The Mouse Liberation Front.

It all came about when all seemed calm, explains MLF Secret Agent 4782 (not his real number). "The last thing that Disney had to do to collect a judgment was to file to collect, and that was it.

"O'Neill said, 'That's crazy. We've got nothing to lose. Let's hit 'em again! Let's start an underground guerilla organization, and instead of signing names and sticking our necks out, we'll sign the stuff with secret agent numbers and have a master code list!' "

The plan evolved thusly: the image of Mickey Mouse was to be spread across America in outrageous renditions produced anonymously by artists who sympathized with the Air Pirates. The cartoon contraband, O'Neill gleefully proposed, would be run like dope. WDP would be placed on the defensive by an aroused army of phantom satirists.

When Walt Disney Productions found their characters once again turned against them by O'Neill, they filed a new lawsuit against both the offending artist and Stewart Brand. But not unlike the United States in Vietnam, Disney may have underestimated the vulnerability of large, visible targets to mobile guerilla insurgents. MLF Agent 4782 continues:

"By that time other artists had been contacted who were willing to do Disney parodies in the most outrageous ways possible and to place them wherever possible. Secret Agent 00 organized an art show, a real grab-bag of mostly fine arts." There was a painting of Mickey in Mona Lisa drag. A photograph showed Mickey painted on a woman's bare breast, her nipple serving as his nose. Mouse paintings, sculptures, cartoons and photographs were contributed by the dozens, with heretofore wholesome Mickey posed in contexts to give Minnie the vapors.

The MLF art show began a tour of the comic conventions as the summer of '79 heated up. Predictably, it got media attention. "The news items that we generated were about 90% favorable," says my MLF source. "They took the angle that Disney has this wonderful upstanding image, and yet here they are being cruel to these struggling artists."

Shortly thereafter a truce materialized between Disney, the remaining Air Pirates, and Stewart Brand. The exact terms remain secret, though Disney made sure that the press understood that the parodists, in signing it, admitted to error on their part. But apparently the financial Sword of Damocles looming over the young artists' heads was voluntarily withdrawn by the Mouse's custodians.

To suggest that Disney abruptly knuckled under to MLF pressure is to try and package reality too neatly, I imagine. From an outsider's point of view, it does seem that the overall aggravation must have outweighed any benefit to Disney in keeping the battle going. And they did succeed in getting Dan O'Neill off their back.

"He finally wore 'em out!" is how Ted Richards puts it. "The whole genius of his thing was that he *did it again*, in the face of it all. He came back out swinging when they thought they had us trapped."

The Air Pirates took a lot on the chin as a consequence of their youthful feistiness, more than most of us would be ready for. As the dust from their long fray settles, the issues linger on.

"The irony," comments John Keker, Dan O'Neill's attorney, "is that although Dan lost the case, or the opinions that were written do not favor him, the individual artist is probably on safer ground when he has clear political and editorial content in a parody.

"Dan's case really crystalized the tension between the First Amendment—commenting on a character who these days is as much a part of American life as George Washington—and Disney's right to protect its commercial characters.

"Dan's case pointed out to everybody that it's a very *difficult* tension and balance, whereas before it didn't seem as though courts thought it was quite so difficult."

Even powerful copyright-holders are more likely to give thought to that difficulty in the wake of the Air Pirates case. Perhaps they may be slow to grab for the nearest sledge hammer when next they discover that the impudent comic strip character thumbing its nose at them from across the street is their own copyrighted creation.

Next issue: *In Part 3, life on the chopping block; or, where do things stand for the rest of us parodists?* ■

What are Direct Sales?

By PETER DAVID

Would you rather, with a large amount of effort, make 12 cents or, with a minimum effort, make 50 cents?

For the Independent Distributors (ID's) who distribute comics countrywide, and for their retail customers, the answer has clearly been the latter. And as a result, from the 1950s right on through to the early 1970s, comics suffered. Letters pages in comics frequently had plaintive missives saying "Why can't I get the newest *Rampaging Sponge* on a regular basis?" Newsstands frequently missed a month or more, making things particularly difficult for titles with continuing storylines.

Things were difficult also for the few comics shops in the country. When Bill and Steve Schanes, founders of Pacific Comics, opened San Diego's first retail comics store in the early '70s, they found that the wholesale distribution system was "screwed up," according to Pacific's purchasing agent Dave Scroggy. Back then, said Scroggy, "the ID's could not fill quantities as the business expanded. To them all comics were the same."

And then—The Direct System: A new system of distribution which, in little over a decade since its inception, raised the sales of most titles published by Marvel and DC, raised the cover price on some titles, raised an entire generation of "direct-only" titles such as *Elfquest, and Cerebus the Aardvark,* and raised the ire of wholesalers as they saw business being cut out from under them.

Actually, the seeds of the direct system were planted back in the mid-1950s with the demise of the American News Company. They were a major wholesaler employing hundreds of people and, according to distributor and former comics-shop owner Bill Morse, "providing 46 of the 48 states and capable of guaranteeing 80-90 percent sales on most titles.

"When American News collapsed in 1954 the pulp magazines collapsed with it," said Morse. "*Colliers,* the *Saturday Evening Post* and others collapsed. *Time* and *Newsweek* went to heavy

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mail order. And distribution was left in the hands of some 800 ID's, which is how it has remained."

For the ID's comics were not then, and are not now, a high profit item. With comics at a 60 cents cover price, a wholesaler will only usually make 12 cents, 20 percent. The retailers—newsstands, supermarkets—who buy from the wholesaler usually buy at a 20 percent discount and will therefore only take in 12 cents a comic. Other deterrents are the large amount of display space that comics require and the vast assortment of titles each month. It is easier to sell 50 copies of *Playboy* with a $2.50 price tag than 200 comics, and more profitable.

Sol Harrison, retired president of DC Comics, was vice president in the early 1970s. The distributor for DC was Independent News, a subsidiary, which has since changed its name to Warner Publishing Services.

"We actually felt that wholesale of comics wasn't going anywhere," said Harrison. "We were losing outlets. Mom and Pop stores were disappearing, being replaced by supermarkets who didn't want to carry comics. They felt kids would be lying in the aisles reading them, or knocking over the racks. We needed new outlets."

Several years before that, in 1968, Phil Seuling held his first comic art convention and comics fandom had been growing for 10 years by then.

According to Bill Morse, "Phil Seuling saved the comic companies' tails." Wholesalers agree. So does Seuling.

Seuling says that he can not remember a time when he didn't read comics. He was a fast, early reader, backing up a claim by John Winkler of Curtis Circulating Company (Marvel's distribution arm) that comic books are "reader-breeders." Before turning in 1976 to concentrate fully on his Sea Gate Distributors, with partner Jonni Levas, Seuling spent 18 years as a teacher of high school English, and had been selling old comics since 1958

"After two, three years, DC Comics listened to me regarding the direct market," said Seuling. There were several factors involved, he said. "First, how could sales have been worse? Second, comic companies knew that they could trust me."

Harrison concurrs. "We started going to Phil's conventions and we saw a different breed of buyer. We saw people who were interested in saving comics, and people who were interested in buying two and three copies. It was not an easy decision since, as a company selling to and beholding to wholesalers, this was a revolutionary thing."

What was revolutionary? Seuling was able to buy comics from DC at a much higher discount and sell to dealers at a correspondingly high discount—as much as 50%. Payment was in advance. Most of all, the comics were not returnable. The bane of publishing's existence has always been that ID customers can return the product—comics, magazines, or books—and get full credit towards further purchases. The retailers need never take risks, and the publishers never knew where they stood with a title.

"It's not unusual for us to put out three books to sell one and half at the newsstand," said Carol Kalish, direct sales manager at Marvel Comics. Kalish praises the new system, saying, "There are comic book readers who want to be sold in a definite manner. The reader wants a place where the purchaser is acknowledged as a person, and not someone who is somewhat off key. Comics are a hobby that deserves to be catered to."

Marvel began selling direct to Seuling a month after DC's lead. Sol Harrison said, "It was always the type of person who says, 'Let's try it and see.' No one knew what could happen, except Seuling."

Harrison had to deal on two fronts with reaction to the new market. As John Winkler of Curtis commented, "The ID's feel they are losing their business. Anytime business is taken away, it's like waving a red flag." Harrison neatly sidestepped the issue by simply not telling DC's sister company, Independent News, what DC was up to, until it was already in operation for several months.

"We didn't know if the wholesalers would kill us," said Harrison. "In 40 years nothing new had been done. When a company is doing something that long in one direction, that is wrong."

The other resistance came from higher management at DC, but "once they discovered they were getting paid in advance, resistance melted," said Harrison.

That, of course, was Seuling's greatest challenge. "In the beginning, people said to me, 'I'll pay you next month—I need the comics now.' You'd have to be blind, deaf and dumb to give credit to everyone. Not everyone is honest. My biggest asset was my reputation," Seuling added. "I had to get two months worth of orders with no guarantee other than my reputation."

"Phil had some vision," said Bill Morse. "I thought, all this work and effort for a few pennies, it's not sensible. But you put together several thousand pennies, it makes sense."

Slowly, sales began to pick up. As time passed, other comics distributors, or "jobbers," decided they wanted to open direct accounts themselves—instead of buying direct from Seuling (Sea Gate was actually started around 1977), they too would also buy directly from the comics companies.

They met with varying degrees of success

Dave Scroggy at Pacific Comics said, "We grew to a point where we were in a position to open accounts with Marvel. We did. It took longer to open an account with DC. Sol Harrison saw no reason to expand the direct market."

WHUH?!
OOF!
A CHALLENGE WAND —!
WHAT IS IT...SAVAN?
I HAVE NOT SEEN ONE IN CENTURIES!
WHAT IT?!!
WHEN ALL INVOLVED ARE BEFORE ME, I SHALL TELL YOU WHAT IT MEANS...
CHOP!
ART © 1982 WARP GRAPHICS

A detail from an early issue of *Elfquest*, the comic that showed that people can produce their own publication and make it profitable.

CEREBUS COULD BEAT UP ANYONE IN THIS HOTEL. CEREBUS COULD TAKE THEM ON FOUR AND FIVE AT A TIME. NO SWEAT.
OH?
DO YOU UNDERSTAND HOW MUCH CEREBUS IS SAYING?
I'M NOT SURE THAT I DO.
NO.
ART © 1980 DAVE SIM

Cerebus by Dave Sim showed that an independent comic can be produced monthly and still make a profit.

Indeed, Marvel has a reputation of being easier to deal with. Mike Friedrich, Marvel's former direct sales manager, said "Marvel made decisions on what was best for our purposes when it came to opening new accounts. There was no decision to be easier than any other publisher."

Marvel was also burned badly, having to write off a bad debt of a six-figure-sum to the demise of Big Rapids Distribution in Michigan and more recently lost money, along with DC, to the bankruptcy of New Media Irjax in Florida.

Harrison does not dispute being more demanding than Marvel, commenting, "Marvel got hurt selling to some people who didn't pay. We tried to be more conservative."

Some interpreted it otherwise. Hal Schuster of New Media Publishing said, "Phil Seuling was in at the beginning and the publishers saw it as Phil's little toy.

"It'd always been our feeling that the comic market is best served by a local distributor and not one person sitting in New York."

As a result, a suit was filed in 1978 by the now-defunct Irjax charging unfair business practices on the part of the publishers. The instigators were Schuster's father and brother, Irwin and Jack (hence "Irjax.") Named in the suit were DC, Marvel, Warren (publishers of *Eerie*, *Creepy*) and O'Quinn Studios (publishers of *STARLOG*, *COMICS SCENE*).

The suit, settled in early 1979 out of court, resulted in a small monetary award for Irjax (literally paid off in comic books) and guarantees of fairer business practices all around.

"Before the suit there were almost no accounts and only one (Sea Gate) was allowed drop shipping (shipping directly from the printing plant to retailers, allowing some stores to get their comics several days before others). After the suit there were more accounts, and others could drop ship. It's always been our feeling that if the suit had not taken place, the direct market might not exist as it does now," said Schuster.

Mike Friedrich considers this a fair statement. "What the suit did was require companies to establish relatively public, consistent sales terms . . . I believe that sooner or later it would have happened anyway—the legal situation simply required that it happen sooner."

According to Sol Harrison, "We never treated (Irjax) differently from any other customer . . . We used to get calls from Seuling saying he hadn't received things while others already had. Some people just like to sue. When you're in business, people do that."

Marvel currently has 14 direct accounts. DC has fewer, though DC direct sales manager Roger Slifer states that no one has trouble getting DC comics from other sources and "that DC standards aren't the same as Marvel's, so it really isn't a comparable circumstance. Additionally, some accounts who are direct with Marvel have never sought to become a direct account with DC, presumably because they are happy buying their DCs from their current source."

According to Marvel's trade terms, the minimum monthly order for direct sales is $8000, consisting of a minimum of 100 copies of a title per months with orders being in multiples of 50. Wholesalers buy at a 60 percent discount, and drop shipping is available to anyone, providing specified terms are met.

DC treats its sales information as confidential, though V.P.-Operations Paul Levitz does place the percentage of total sales by direct as between 25 and 50 percent. Marvel is a bit freer with their figures—direct manager Carol Kalish agrees that direct constitutes some 50 percent of sales and 70 percent of profit, possibly due to the higher prices of their direct-only titles, *Micronauts*, *Hulk-Zar* and *Moon Knight*.

"*Micronauts* had hit a newsstand sales slump," said Kalish, recalling how Marvel's direct-only line had come about back in May of 1981. "The direct market had been telling us, 'We can do it,' (meaning that the direct market could be the sole support for the title.) But you see, if we took one book direct, it would have been a lousy experiment. So we took two more, which were young and not yet established. Whenever books go direct, there is much agonizing here. Readers who aren't near comic shops, out in Nowhere, Illinois, cannot get the books, so we're hesitant. We still get plaintive letters saying, 'Where's *Micronauts*? Where's *Moon Knight*?' "

The problem of inaccessibility to the casual reader is partially offset by the rapid growth of comic shops throughout the country, going from a mere handful in 1970 to today, where estimates range from 700 to 3000 if one includes, as does Kalish, stores that do not deal just in comics: for example, used book stores that maintain a full line of comics. Also, comic shops themselves are expanding into science fiction, gaming—such as *Dungeons and Dragons*, and even in a more juvenile direction such as the Heroes World stores across the country that are stocking plush toys such as Snoopy and Smurfs.

Some stores are offering direct mail services to some customers or otherwise extending courtesies. Heroes Aren't Hard to Find, situated in Charlotte, North Carolina, runs a small subscription service and also has a reserve service for 600 customers. Dave Kaler, manager of Manhattan's Supersnipe Comic Emporium (and who also goes by the whimsical *non de guerre* of Rex Chessman) claims a mail order business of 25,000 customers in back date books alone.

Another liability of direct sales has been the very thing that made it so attractive to publishers in the first place—non-returnability.

Dennis Cieri, owner of the Village SF and Comics Shop in New York City, says that the "all-sales-final" aspect of direct has made him wary. "For example," he said, "Marvel really hyped up the new *Team America* series. So taking Marvel on its word, I put in a large order. It didn't move at all. So I'm stuck with several hundred copies."

What will he do with the remainders? "I don't know—use them for kindling, I guess. As a result of *Team America*, I can't believe Marvel when they're now hyping the new *Hercules* limited series, so I'm ordering less of that than I would have. It takes a few good hits to erase a failure."

Ray Raimondi, one of the proprietors of a Heroes World franchise in Livingston, New Jersey, strongly disagrees.

"Is no-returns a disadvantage? If I'm ordering between 7-10,000 books a month and I'm left with 500, is that a disadvantage? No way. The remainder gets sold to collectors months later.

"I don't care what *Team America* did," continued Raimondi. "The *Silver Surfer* book sold out in no time. Each one had to be judged on its individual merit. I was going to order 750 *Silver Surfers* no matter what. For any one time Marvel has missed, they've been right four other times."

Thus far, Marvel has been more aggressive than DC in exploring the potential of the direct sales market. As of fall of 1980, *X-Men* was selling over 100,000 copies per issue on the direct market.

"For us, *X-Men* pinpointed the importance of the Direct Market," said Marvel's Carol Kalish. *"Daredevil* amplified it . ."

Under the creative hand of Frank Miller, *Daredevil* has become an example of what can happen to a book that comes to be a fan favorite. *Daredevil*, creatively inert, had been cut back to bi-monthly, a sure sign of cancellation to come. When Miller took over the artistics and subsequently the writing chores, the book began a steady climb which brought back a reinstatement of its monthly status and an increase in sales in the course of one year of 42 percent. In one month alone in early 1982 it picked up 15-20,000 copies.

"The direct market rewards people who aren't complacent," said Kalish, "and responds to innovation."

Marvel's first really big score in direct marketing was to release *Dazzler #1* on a direct-basis only. Ray Raimondi of Heroes World said, "I wish I'd ordered more of that one. We sold 1000, and we could have sold 1500." The first issue of *Dazzler* wound up selling 400,000 copies.

Marvel has also made innovations in format. The graphic novel, *The Death of Captain Marvel* by Jim Starlin (writer/artist of the fan-popular but short-lived *Warlock*) was a hit on the direct market, selling out of three printings. Future graphic novels are planned throughout 1983 and DC has plans for their own line.

Pacific Comics has grown from a comics distributor to comics publisher and with a booth like this, have branched out into book publishing and distribution.

DC, meantime, is making its own entrees into the fan market. The new *Night Force*, written and drawn by Marv Wolfman and Gene Colan respectively, while not direct-only, is still expected to appeal to the same audience that made that team's *Tomb of Dracula* such a popular fan title at Marvel.

DC is also further exploring the direct market by releasing direct-only comics, called "nonreturnables" by DC. *Camelot 3000* premiered in September as the first such title and it is being followed by *The Omega Men* in January, Frank Miller's maxi-series in April and sometime later, *The Vigilante*, created by Marv Wolfman and George Perez.

Among the means that DC will be utilizing to promote the new direct efforts, according to direct manager Roger Slifer, will be posters, promotions at conventions, counter displays and, possibly, floor displays (or "dumps"). The dumps premiered this summer with DC's annuals.

But the "mainstream" comics companies are far from the only publications geared for direct marketing. Indeed, store owner Dennis Cieri states that DC's and Marvel's constitute only 70 percent of his dollar income, with the rest coming from fanzines, magazines and comics, both black-and-white and in color, that have minimal newsstand distribution and make their living off the fans.

There are various terms attempting to define various publications: undergrounds, ground levels, etc. Many prefer simply the term Independent Publishers.

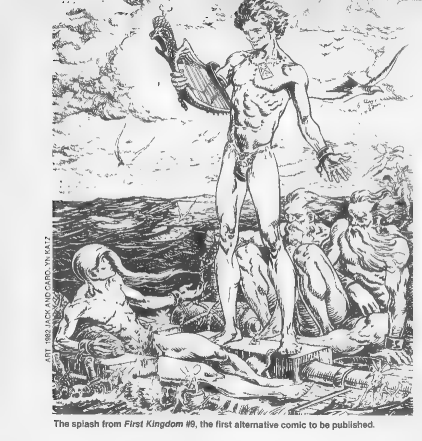
Richard Pini, who with his wife Wendy produce *Elfquest* (according to Pini the most popular independently produced comic title on the market) said that the publication of Jack Katz's *First Kingdom*, published by Bud Plant, (1976) and Mike Friedrich's *Star*Reach* (1974) started the message that "it can be successful. *(Elfquest)* was an educated gamble. People knew of Wendy's artwork, and the response and feedback was good enough."

Receiving advice from Plant (a long-time specialist in comics-oriented material who started a mail-order business in 1970 and 10 years later started his own direct accounts) and Friedrich and Seuling, WaRP Graphics (Wendy And Richard Pini) began publishing *Elfquest* themselves in 1978 with just a little experience and a print run of 10,000. It has a current run of 50,000, has spawned a mini-industry of *Elfquest*-related products (under WaRP's careful supervision) and just recently signed an animated film agreement.

And yet Richard Pini says, "I think we can do more. There are still stores that don't carry it. We can make them aware. And we can make readers aware that a given store could carry it if they don't already."

Started about the same time was *Cerebus the Aardvark*, produced in Canada by Dave Sim (artist) and wife Deni Loubert (publisher) which went from an erratic bi-monthly schedule to a regular 15 time a year publication. In addition to *Cerebus* paraphernalia it also promoted a major fandom scam when bogus copies of *Cerebus#1*, valued at between $100 and $200 surfaced.

An even newer addition to the scene is the advent of color comics independently published. Last year Pacific Comics started their own line with



The splash from *First Kingdom* #9, the first alternative comic to be published.

Captain Victory by Jack Kirby—Kirby being the ideal choice, according to Dave Scroggy at Pacific, because of his high recognition factor. Kirby, some people feel, was ahead of his time in his earlier work. Carol Kalish at Marvel said, "Take the *New Gods*, for example. Those were fine for a market that didn't yet exist."

Since then, Pacific has followed up with other titles by fan-popular artists, such as *Pacific Presents* by Steve Ditko and Dave Stevens.

Eclipse Enterprises has also been in the lead with new material for the direct market. Eclipse was founded by Dean Mullaney and his brother Jan. Jan said, "Dean came to me and said, 'The direct market company now, it's going to be successful' . . . My reaction was 'Let's go with it.' We took a shot and it paid off."

Jan, whose grounding was in the business end of music, is now the president of Eclipse. Their first venture was *Sabre* by Don McGregor and Paul Gulacy, a graphic novel published a good five years before Marvel's first such entry. "Don (McGregor) wanted to do something out of the mainstream," said Jan, "and Dean wanted to publish something. At the time Dean was working in a bank nine to five and he just wasn't into it." (For a full story on Eclipse, see issue number two.)

A curious side-effect of the direct system has been the symbol on covers of mainstream comics. Books distributed through ID's have UPC labels, black and white "zebra" labels in the lower left corner. Direct titles have no UPC labels and, at Marvel, originally a little diamond around the price and now an 'M.' This has given rise to a rather oddball speculation as to which will be worth more. The practice of markings distinguishing values is one retained from coin collecting where mint markings can make a coin worth much more (comics retain other numismatic leanings such as conditions of the books being called "very fine" and "mint," truly silly since comics are hardly printed in the U.S. Mint but in Sparta, Illinois).

"What collectors are doing is denying the validity of the reason for comics, which is that it's a hobby," said Kalish. "The preoccupation is overlooking the fun of collecting, which is part of the reason why direct came about."

The reason for the markings is so that dishonest direct dealers cannot tear off the covers of unsold books and sell them to a regular wholesale outlet, who can in turn send them back to the comic companies for credit. Stripped covers are one method that retailers have of getting return credit, the other being an affidavit system wherein they claim that the books have been destroyed. The affidavit system, because of it great reliance on the honesty of the retailers and the lack of ability by publishers to do anything other than spot-check and pray, was one of the reasons why a non-returnable system was conceived of in the first place.

Where will direct go from here? Warner Communications has assigned marketing consultant Leon Knize to a long term study, and thus far the speculation is that the direct market has a growth potential of five times its present size.

"Over the next 5 to 10 years," said Roger Slifer, "I think there will be a minimum increase of 400 percent." In fact, Slifer won't "rule out the possibility of someday having an all-direct market. Some ID's are making an effort to compete, but the directs are very aggressive. If they continue to be as aggressive, it could be all direct."

The general consensus is, though, that there will continue to be ID wholesalers handling comics, at least for the foreseeable future. Wholesalers still distribute to more parts of the country than comic book jobbers can, and most comics readers are first turned on to buying at the newsstand and gradually work their way up.

Or are they?

Fifteen years ago, Bob's Sweet Shop (although it was not called that then) in Bloomfield, New Jersey, used to carry the full line of both DC and Marvel comics. Today there are slightly under a dozen of both lines total. At a recent look, *Swamp Thing #1* was on the stand when DC was already out with #3.

Carol Clark, the co-owner, said, "We don't have a call for comics, so we're not going to overstock. The kids are usually satisfied with the titles that we have."

Indeed, most of Clark's customers for comics are either grandparents buying gifts for the very young, like around five or six. Comics are considered a novelty item.

"When you and I were kids, we spent our money on comics," said Clark. "Now when the kids have money they pick and choose, if they want any comics at all. Mostly they're not as much into that but into video games."

And at one end of Bob's Sweet Shop was a group of almost a dozen junior-high-school-age boys, grouped around *Robotron* and *Turbo* plunking in quarter after quarter.

Clark thinks that all direct is possible and, if that happened, she said she would continue to stock a few comics as novelties, although probably about half of her current display.

"Will video games last?" she said. "Look at how long pinball machines were around. The customers demand certain things and I'm here to please my customers." ■

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Guest Spot

A Declaration of Independents

By DEAN MULLANEY

Dean Mullaney is the copublisher (with his brother Jan) of Eclipse Comics. A former comics critic and historian, Dean introduced the graphic album to America's direct sales market in 1979 when he published Sabre *by Don McGregor and Paul Gulacy. He currently edits* Eclipse *magazine and is Editor-in-Chief of the company's line of four-color comic books. For the full history of Eclipse, see* COMICS SCENE *#2.*

I recently called up a newsstand distributor friend of mine and asked him how comics are selling on the racks. He told me that he is having great difficulty getting comics on the newsstands any more. This is a guy with clout who does two million dollars worth of business a year and handles all the major magazines as well as comics. Yet he can't get comics in all of his outlets.

Another friend of mine, a long-time observer of the comics scene, looked at the direct sales market for the first time and remarked, "They've changed the rules. Now they're throwing hardballs!"

And so it goes.

In 1977 when I began publishing comics, the independent newsstand distributors, such as my friend, controlled the comics industry. There weren't enough comic shops around the country at the time to even think of them as a "market." I decided, though, to aim the Eclipse comics at those shops because they were the direct path to you, the discriminating comics fan. I felt then, and continue to feel, that the comics fan is the backbone of the industry, and will continue to support it in a way the casual newsstand browser will not.

The past five years have proved me right. More and more comic shops have opened and we now have such a thing as a viable direct sales system. Whereas in the past comics were supposedly geared towards the "occasional readers" who bought their comics at the proverbial corner drug store, now it is you, the comics diehard, who comprise the majority.

For the first time in history, more comics are sold in comic shops than on newsstands. My distributor friend may regret this, but his day, the day of coverless returns and "premature" undistributed copies, is over.

One factor inherent in the direct sales system is that the publisher knows exactly how many copies will be sold *before the comic is printed!* When Eclipse announces a new title such as *Sabre* or *Ms. Tree's Thrilling*

Dean Mullaney

Detective Adventures, I can avoid costly overprinting and don't have to deal with returned copies. Aside from the ecological saving of trees, this set up makes it more affordable to publish comics. And so, no longer are there just two or three companies controlling the kinds of comics you see. There are now eight companies publishing four-color comics for you to read. Eight companies, each with a different approach and a different point of view.

Superhero comics have been the mainstay of the industry for over 20 years. However, this was not always the case. At their height in the 1950's, there were over 150 romance titles, almost 40 crime/detective comics, and more than 70 westerns being published. Today those genres are virtually non-existent. There are only two crime/detective comics, two romance titles (both reprint) and one lone western.

Why is the subject matter of comics so restricted?

Once the superhero renaissance took place in the 1960s, the major companies were voluntarily locked into a formula of success. Eventually it seemed as if superheroes were not only the best *selling* comic books, they were an editor's definition of what a comic *is*, and "editorial policy" became virtually synonomous with "superheroes only." Cries of "This isn't comics, that isn't comics," were not uncommon in the editorial offices when new proposals were offered by writers and artists. The formula had worked and each company was going to steadfastly imitate both itself and "the competition." Creators were handcuffed by the status quo. If they were allowed some freedom of expression, it was so watered down by editorial butchering that the original concept was not recognizable.

Michael Moorcock once said that the creator, not the editor, is usually the best judge of how to present his or her work before the public. This has obviously not been the situation with the two major comics companies. Creators were told that they "didn't understand" the economics of the industry, and they either acceded to the editors' demands, or were booted.

Neither company was willing to allow creators to own their own creations. This also stagnated the medium since, in this day of copyright awareness, few writers or artists were going to give their characters away lock, stock and barrel.

Along came the independent comic companies, offering creators virtually unprecedented freedom from editorial formulas. The creators naturally responded by opening many previously withheld corners of their imaginations. If you look at the titles currently

Two upcoming releases from Eclipse.

published by independent companies, you will see superhero comics, crime/detective comics, funny animal, sword and sorcery, occult, science fiction, horror, "serious" funny animal and fantasy comics. There is a variety offered which, at this time, neither of the two major companies can match.

The independent companies are working with the creators in order to expand the medium. Frank Capra's advice to new filmmakers a few years ago applies to comics as well. He said, "Don't follow trends. Start trends. Don't compromise."

Even more important, the independents have paved the way for comics creators to give their best by insuring that they, not the publishers, hold the copyrights on all the material they produce. Despite claims that Marvel and DC Comics have recently made "landmark" moves in this area, creator owned copyrights have existed for many years in the world of prose publication. In Europe, where copyright laws have traditionally been more favorable to creators than in the U.S., they have been standard, even with comics publishers, for decades. And America is not without its forbears. In the 1940s such rebels as Al Capp, Milton Caniff and Will Eisner retained ownership of their creations. Thus, Capp was able to retire *L'il Abner* rather than see it fall into the hands of a syndicate hack, Caniff owns *Steve Canyon*, and now that there is a *Spirit* movie in the works, no conglomerate negotiated the rights—it was Will Eisner who signed the papers and reaped the resultant rewards. The 1960s brought Wally Wood's *witzend* and underground comix. In the 1970s Mike Friedrich's *Star*Reach* and then Eclipse entered the field, bringing with them expanded creators' rights. The 1980s have thus far seen Pacific and First Comics join us. Marvel's upcoming "Epic Line," in fact, offers creator owned copyrights belatedly, as does DC's proposed deals. Neither company, however, is willing to make this policy retroactive, so as to involve their regular lines.

Creator-owned copyrights are finally becoming accepted as the norm. But this hasn't occured without a long and arduous fight, culminating, I think, with Eclipse's publication of *Destroyer Duck* #1, from which all profits went to aid Steve Gerber in his court battle to establish his ownership of Howard the Duck.

From the inside looking out: An over-the-shoulder view of last year in the direct sales marketplace.

The independent comics companies have led the way into the modern age, with the two major companies grudgingly following in our wake.

The future is not certain yet. Although the trend is definitely toward lower print runs, direct sales, creator owned copyrights, diversity of genres, and the end of a 20-year monopoly by "The Big Two" publishers, there are still unanswered questions. Will the move away from newsstand distribution spell the end of comics as a mass medium or will the existence of comic book shops, like that of record stores, eventually be accepted as the norm? Is the market really ready for stories more sophisticated than those involving hypermuscled men in colorful tights and leotards beating each other up? (We at Eclipse are banking on it!) And will the "majors" take tightly the incursions which the independents are making into their profits?

The last question is certainly the easiest to answer, and the answer is "no." That's why my other friend, the one who plays centerfield at the Sunday sand-lot game, said, "They're throwing hardballs now."

Competition is a two-edged sword: creators are guaranteed a share of the pie by the new copyright deals, but they have to turn out their best efforts to succeed under the resultant "free agent" system. Hack work will not suffice. The publishers stand to make their share of money—as long as they supply the kind of comics their increasingly discriminating readers want. Simply flooding the market with "product" will not suffice, as the majors will soon find out.

It is the fan who benefits most of all from competition—especially the fan who buys from comic shops and is eager for a respite from formula superhero comics. Count yourself lucky, folks, competition only brings you one problem: finding the money to buy those exciting new comics! ■

Mr Mullaney has been given a free hand to express his thoughts and ideas in any manner he wishes within the scope of this publication. This column does not necessarily reflect the editorial views of COMICS SCENE nor our philosophy.

COMING IN STARLOG #65

Sure, we know we're months away from the premiere of *Revenge of the Jedi* but when Mark Hamill was in town, we nabbed him for a quick chat. Hamill told Sue Adamo what it felt like filming the last chapter in the current trilogy and his plans for the future. Rounding out the coverage, we also have a report from a young man who was Hamill's stand-in during the now infamous Yuma, Arizona shooting.

Arthur C. Clarke, the grandmaster of science fiction, talks about space, the military and his new novel, *2010: Odyssey Two*, the sequel to *2001: A Space Odyssey*, being published in December. This exclusive interview is a real treat!

We'll be previewing *Dark Crystal*, the Gary Kurtz/Jim Henson/Frank Oz fantasy film that will introduce us to the Mystics, Skekses, Gelflings and Fizzgigs among some 60-odd other creatures populating a world never before seen.

Industrial Light and Magic reveals its participation on *E.T.* with a special look at the special effects involved. There'll be lots of great color photos accompanying this feature.

Ed Naha, now relocated in Los Angeles, begins a regular column on Hollywood and the first piece is an-the-set visit to ABC's *Starflight One* telefilm and a talk with star Hal Linden. Ed also gives us a peek at *Dance of the Dwarves*, a decidedly different monster movie.

And of course we have lots more: first color photos from *Superman III*, a *Raiders of the Lost Ark* poster, part three of our six part *Celebrity Treasure Hunt* contest, David Gerrold and Bjo Trimble continue to ruminate on *Star Trek II*, reports on new video games, new books and new movies. Join us when we go

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Perez

(Continued from page 38)

Dillin with a small handful of reprints and one George Tuska fill-in. And with DC's royalty plan, the incentive to stay with the book is strong. They have helped finance a house his wife Carol and he are planning to buy next year. They are considering a move to Virginia, a place they fell in love with while on vacation. Perez also takes pride in being part of the DC's resurgence of strength.

"DC's whole reputation has turned around because of the *Titans*," Perez pointed out. "When the first issue came out, it only sold about 35,000 in the direct market and now it's about 130,000. When both *Night Force* and *Firestorm* came out with their first issues, they were in the 90,000 range . . . something that DC would never have done before the *Titans*. We are very, very proud of what we have done."

Finally, Perez commented that it is now very lucrative to stay in comics, something untrue as recently as two years ago. "Mostly because we had faith that someone was thinking about us. Someone like Jim Shooter at Marvel and Paul Levitz was working at DC with Jenette Kahn to make things fairer. And by sticking to our guns and proving we were valuable—before there were royalties—we got a very, very high Christmas bonus, Marv and I got the highest bonus in the company. We still enjoy working, if not more, and the financial incentive has allowed for new ideas to come out more freely. I love being in the business."

Such devotion has helped spark new ideas for titles and new characters such as Terra, the first new Titan to join since the book premiered in 1980. Wolfman and Perez have also created a new character named Vigilante who is tentatively set to premiere in the second *Titans* annual and is described as *Death Wish*-in-tights. The character is slated to get his own series, which Wolfman will write, if they can find the right artist. So far, Ed Hannigan, Trevor Von Eeden and Kerry Gammill have all had to pass it up.

But for Perez, life goes on very happily. With his incredible speed of some 20-25 pages a week, he is working at full tilt and still taking time to enjoy life with his new wife Carol and experiment with his art. There's no doubt that in the coming years George Perez will rank among the major comics creators of recent memory. With his blending of strength and grace, he has carved a niche for himself in the hearts of comics fans and has earned the admiration of his co-workers.

Not a bad way for a kid from the South Bronx to end up. ■

Creating the Comics

Part Four C: Inking

A Forum Starring

Klaus Janson • Bob Layton • Joe Rubinstein • Denys Cowan

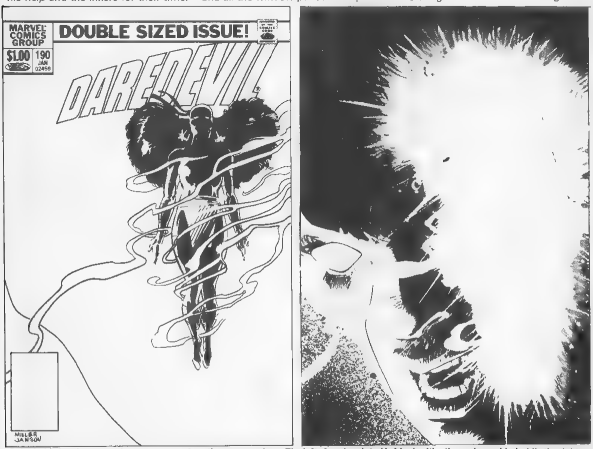
Hosted By ROBERT GREENBERGER

Editor's Note: Last issue our forum covered quite a bit of ground regarding technique and opinions about inking over various pencillers. Tom Palmer had to leave before the panel finished up but Denys Cowan, a penciller, became actively invoved in the last third of the discussion. As the coffee grew cold and the Marvel staffers left for the weekend, the foursome concluded the discussion with some thought about breaking into the business and some other diddies. Once again, our thanks to Jim Shooter for his help and the inkers for their time.

JANSON: I wanted to say that there has been a basic misunderstanding on what an inker does and even in the fan press which is supposed to be more knowledgeable and more intellectual, they don't understand what he contributes to the book. And if there's any way we can educate or clarify . . .

CS: That's what the whole Creating the Comics series in COMIC SCENE is all about.

RUBINSTEIN: At conventions, guys show me their work and they're very proud they used their Rapidograph and all the window panes are squared off and all the little details are flecked in. They don't realize that it's the physical manipulation of the brush it is composition, it is storytelling. A penciller has a white piece of paper and he has to storytell on it. Klaus or whoever, with layouts, or even with pencils, has to be a storyteller within the limitations of the pencils. How do I make Elektra look like she is standing on the ground? Drawing has a lot to do with it but you have to be, (I don't know if you're really as much of an artist as the penciller) but you have to know a great deal about drawing and



Color holds involve an overlay process, such as the one seen here. The left piece is printed in black with other colors added while the right piece is printed only in red, with no black rules, outlines or shadows.

composition. When Klaus colors *Daredevil*, we know what a cohesive unit it is because he's anticipating something. You don't put zips in places you would for other colors because you know you're in control of that. The Ben Urich issue of *Daredevil*, #179 or something, I called up Frank and said, "The perfect comic has been done." There were technical flaws and maybe this wasn't drawn well enough or whatever but it was stupendous. Now Frank Miller was 50 percent of it and Klaus Janson was 50 percent of it, because Klaus picked up the ball and he understood what to do with it.

CS: How can you show DC or Marvel that you're a good inker?

LAYTON: Get xeroxes of pencilled pages.

RUBINSTEIN: Just practice.

JASON: The tradition has always been to ink on vellum over xeroxes of pencils. Did you do that?

LAYTON: Yeah.

RUBINSTEIN: If you can, letter the page and put in the panel borders and make it look as much like a finished product as possible. It's just a way of presentation and you don't present 400 pages, you know.

Be smart, don't ink Gil Kane on your first try.

JANSON: Certainly don't let them see it.

CS: Can you suggest some pencillers who are best to practice with?

JANSON: Curt Swan.

RUBINSTEIN: Many times people have brought their samples in to Jim Shooter for pencils and they've inked it themselves and he says, "You don't seem to be a very good penciller but here, try inking."

LAYTON: Al Milgrom said to me, about inkers turned pencillers, you find out that you're compensating for different things. Al and I both talked about the fact that it's really great that we learned—he learned from Murphy Anderson and I learned from Woody [Wally Wood]—but as an inker you have to analyze everyone's work that comes in front of you. My pencilling is kind of bits and pieces from everyone I've ever worked off of. The attitude you have about inking is a totally different head than you have for pencilling. In a sense you can concentrate on an arm and ink an arm but when you're drawing, you can't do just an arm, they have to go together or they start looking like Micronauts or something. That's why most inkers turned pencillers are very stiff at first. They still use the same mentality of putting stuff together piecemeal rather than in large units or in forms.

My stuff is still stiff.

RUBINSTEIN: You know if you're an inker and you're tired at the end of the day, you can go through a whole issue and just do Captain America's star or shield or something that doesn't take a lot of thinking.

Frank Miller told me he tried that once and left all the cars til the end and it was two days of agony, putting in all these cars.

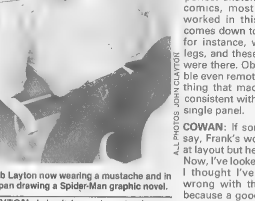
CS: What's the best way to learn how to draw?

RUBINSTEIN: I'm still going to art school.

JANSON: Obviously any kind of formal education is a bonus that can't hurt.

RUBINSTEIN: That is if the school is going in the direction you want.

COWAN: When I was in Art Design, there were only a couple of teachers in that whole school who were thinking in the direction I wanted to go. The most I learned was from just working, working with Rich Buckler, working with Neal Adams.



ALL PHOTOS JOHN CLAYTON

Bob Layton now wearing a mustache and in Japan drawing a Spider-Man graphic novel.

LAYTON: I don't know how to draw.

CS: What about learning anatomy, composition, perspective and the like?

RUBINSTEIN: I'm still learning how to draw better. I'm a fanatic on proper anatomy. Knowing anatomy does not make you a good inker, but I look upon it as one more tool, like which end of the brush do you use. As Denys said, there's no such thing as a good art school, if you can find those one or two teachers who want to go in the direction you want . . . The general attitude in art school these days is "let's transcend realism, let's go beyond looking like a photograph because a photographer can do that" . . . idiots!! Knowledge of other fields—Frank is a real fan of Japanese comics, Frank Lloyd Wright.

CS: It shows in *Daredevil*.

RUBINSTEIN: Right. If you study only from comic books . . . my brother used to raise guppies. As they interbred, he got a bunch of hunchback mutant guppies, and too many pencillers in the business are hunchback pencillers. They all steal from each other, all make the same mistakes . . . Now there's hunchback inkers, people imitating Klaus without knowing why Klaus does what he does. People are imitating Dick Giordano. Dick studied Milton Caniff and Leonard Starr and I studied Stan Drake who I think is my absolute hero as far as comic work goes. John Buscema studied Hal Foster, that's why he draws so well.

COWAN: I think that anatomy and such are important. I'm learning it every day but a lot of the times, when I draw, as far as anatomy goes I'll completely . . . to make a short work, to put an emphasis on a certain action, someone's pushing someone . . . he can go like that [extends arm with fist] or like that [thrusts arm forward, muscles tightened]. I'll dislocate a whole shoulder to get that effect. I'll lengthen a leg, I'll stretch a figure. If it breaks bones in a figure, I'll do it.

RUBINSTEIN: You shouldn't break the rules until you know them.

LAYTON: If you draw realistically and perfect anatomy was a real issue, in comics, most of us wouldn't have worked in this business. The point comes down to, a guy like Jack Kirby, for instance, with his ironing board legs, and these big black masses that were there. Obviously it didn't resemble even remotely, a human being, the thing that made it work was he was consistent with his definition, in every single panel.

COWAN: If someone's talking about, say, Frank's work, I'll say, "He's good at layout but he doesn't draw so well." Now, I've looked at Frank's pencils and I thought I've never seen anything wrong with these drawings, simply because a good drawing is telling the story, not just in the context of storytelling on a page but telling what the character is doing. If you get that initial point across that's a good drawing. It's not the technical aspect, that's secondary.

RUBINSTEIN: It's not to the point where you break rules, where it suddenly stops the flow.

LAYTON: Right, because we are storytellers. We're not supposed to put every panel on the wall like it's some sort of masterpiece. Our job is to tell stories.

RUBINSTEIN: I think people don't bother learning from reality. They never learned what a real phone looks like, they look at the comics. At least know what it is that you're drawing from.

LAYTON: I go to conventions and they bring me 8000 drawings of stuff I've already done. I'll say, "This tree is terrible. Learn how to draw a tree. Don't

Joe Rubinstein now inking the 12 issue *Official Guide to the Marvel Universe.*

look at a comic book, go out and look at a tree." Look at a car, all that stuff is out here, open your eyes. I mean, god, you can pick up any Sears catalogue for free and you can draw people in jakey clothes. The newspapers have all these great photographs and you can get a shitload of stuff in the mail. You can go to any car dealership and get tons of catalogues, brochures and that stuff will last you forever.

When I was doing *Iron Man*, Dave Michelinie had a lot of expertise with guns, he knows them backwards and forwards. If I so much as draw a bad gun, he would shoot me with one. Dave would constantly order these catalogues and give them to me and go, "Look, they're for free. They come in the mail. You want to draw a Walther P-38, here, look at them. You have no excuse to draw it wrong." The thing is it's there, all they have to do is open their eyes and it's there.

Comic books are good to look at in the sense that that's the medium you're going to be working in, that's what it's all about. You have to learn the mechanics of it, that's very important.

COWAN: I can see your point, as far as looking at life and such, and I do. In a cover I just did for *Power Man*, which Mike Carlin ended up inking, I wanted a really good lighting effect with really stark, dramatic stuff and I didn't have a camera, there was no way I could get what I wanted by setting up lights. I pulled out an issue of a Gil Kane/Klaus Janson *Daredevil* and swiped.

LAYTON: You didn't swipe the drawing, you swiped the concept.

JANSON: The interesting thing about what we're saying, is that anatomy is just another tool and the artist—the inker or the penciller—is the funnel for which all this input comes through and we interpret it in out own way. Everything comes through the individual who's working and that comes out in a very particular, characteristic way.

RUBINSTEIN: You can't ink any shirt or pair of pants the way it looks because it would look awful and overdone. Interpreting, simplifying—which fold, what one or two folds are absolutely necessary to convince us.

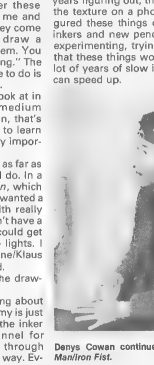
You can't ink hair with a bunch of lines, what it is about the hair that makes it darker or lighter or whatever.

JANSON: The inker has to invent a language in which to communicate, has to figure out how to interpret hair as a solid mass so that people, the reader can identify it and easily say, "That is hair."

LAYTON: What I did with *Iron Man* was, "This is metal." Whenever you see this, this rendering, you know this is metal. When we used Doctor Doom I ignored everything that was done before and he did him like a gray Iron Man. I had to be consistent, like this is the way I interpret a particular object or a particular texture.

COWAN: What Klaus just said about the rendering? That's something I'm just trying to learn. That's why I'd love to have you, Bob, Joe Rubinstein to see how you would interpret what I did. I'd like to learn how to get that rendering down in pencil and in ink. I'd like to see what Tom can do with my stuff.

RUBINSTEIN: I've noticed with new inkers, they have to ink quickly. What they don't realize is that Klaus is as fast as he is because he's spent the years figuring out, that this is the way the texture on a phone looks, he's figured these things out already. New inkers and new pencillers are always experimenting, trying to find a niche that these things work in. You have a lot of years of slow inking before you can speed up.



Denys Cowan continues to pencil *Power Man/Iron Fist.*

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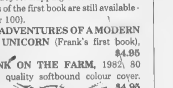

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JANSON: You know, just to contradict Joe, for a second, I was up at Continuity a couple of years ago and watched Neal Adams ink a piece that he had pencilled. He was inking in an extremely slow fashion, and I was looking over his shoulder and asked, "Neal, what are you doing?" And he says, "I'm inking." I thought he was sick. I said, "Why are you inking so slow?" "This is the way I always ink," he says. Nobody ever told me I have to ink slow. I've always inked fast. I developed the style I now have because I ink fast. I started doing it my own way and it developed from there. I've slowed down since then.

LAYTON: You're getting older . . .

RUBINSTEIN: It's not necessarily contradiction; when you started you used to xerox jobs and take a marker and work over, figuring out where your blacks were going to go.

JANSON: Did I do that?

RUBINSTEIN: Yes, you did.

JANSON: I'll deny that. (laughter)

RUBINSTEIN: As far as Neal's inking goes, he doesn't think his inking is as spontaneous as his pencilling and I think part of the reason is, people shouldn't sit down and say, "I'm going to do my serious inking now." People like Frank Springer, Tom Palmer, it all flows, it's all personality.

JANSON: Do you think you're spontaneous?

RUBINSTEIN: No, not at all. That's one of the things that I'm always looking at Springer about. How do I get that in my work? It's like the story I told about the Sienkiewcz thing, (see last issue), you can't impose it because it looks put upon. I'm a very conservative renderer. So that's why I like Brent Anderson, he draws very proper figures, and Alan Weiss and others.

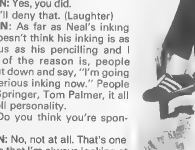
CS: What is the role of an assistant? Where do they come from?

LAYTON: I grow mine in a vat.

RUBINSTEIN: They are people who want to be inkers who happen to live near an inker, or take the train in or live in the same state and they call up and say, "Let me show you my stuff." He shows up and you say; "Well, you're not really good enough but hey, I could use a background man and I could teach you." When I have a background guy, I want his backgrounds to mesh with my inks, and I start them from scratch. I want them to do it my way. Too many people think that a good background is to have everything straight and to have everything meticuously done. I worked with Woody and I showed him a background I was very proud of because it was all straight, he went, "All your lines are meeting." I thought he was teasing so I went, "Yeah!" he said, "Don't do that!" he said to go look at Al Williamson and Angelo Torres and everything is implied. How do you make a building at night with some of the windows blacked out, without making it look like a crossword puzzle? It would be easy if you just took your ruling pen and made it all straight but where do you lose your edges? Your blacks and lights, where do you add detail? That's the trick.

I haven't used an assistant in over a year. They are an economic factor, a speed factor. You can get girl friends to fill in blacks and lay down zip-a-tones.

JANSON: I have a personal thing about using assistants or even speeding up the work in any way. I prefer to do everything—the backgrounds, laying in the zips, laying in the blacks, everything from start to finish.



Klaus Janson will continue to do the full art chores on *Daredevil*.

LAYTON: I would prefer doing my own work, if it's affordable. Thing is with *Iron Man*, it used to bust my moogles because there was so much stuff. Joe wouldn't even take on the book, they offered it to him after I left. He went, "Forget it, there's too much hardware, too many backgrounds.' It's like *Star Wars*, that book's a killer. If you want to do a monthly book and do a real good job, you have no choice sometimes than go and get help.

Dick [Giordano] didn't do so bad, bringing some people into the business, did he?

RUBINSTEIN: We ought to have a reunion at Madison Square Garden of all of Wally Wood's assistants and all of Dick Giordano's assistants.

LAYTON: That's everybody.

CS: What about zip-a-tones? How much do they really add to the work?

RUBINSTEIN: There are many uses for zip.

LAYTON: I use it as a color mainly.

RUBINSTEIN: Or where you want the colorist to put the shadows. Or whether you want to put a gray area down, whether you want to neutralize a color after it's colored over, or things like Thor's helmet. I see amateurs all the time and they don't draw terribly well but god can they zip and air brush. So what? I was rushing once to finish a job and I was putting zips on and they say, "Why do you do that? If you have time you should put zips on." And I said, "I don't look for where to put zips, what does the panel dictate about zips?"

JANSON: Zips I always thought were an adjunct to creating a sense of depth, using it, as Bob said, as a color, using it as a contrast texture.

A lot of times I use graded zips because they add movement and depth.

LAYTON: Klaus uses it very effectively in terms of night scenes and things like that where you can get this graded effect that isn't a real functional thing in terms of a color. You can't get an airbrushed color inside of a four-color comic.

When I used it on *Iron Man*, a lot of times, I found that the pattern itself was so uniform that if I layed it on Iron Man and I broke it up with a little white or something, it gave it a very metallic look.

JANSON: That's the language that you're developing. The reader knows that's metallic because you're using a certain language.

RUBINSTEIN: And Klaus and Bob, Klaus more, has been using zips on color holds (where the color and not the black lines show up on the printed page) to do these interesting effects with big dots.

LAYTON: You can use them for special effects now.

RUBINSTEIN: In *Daredevil* #181 where Bulleye was falling— Klaus put in very fat dots, zips, grading for an effect and you wanted to see the dots more obviously. I just did a thing *Wolverine* where there's this oriental man who's jumping onto Wolverine's face. He's going to hurt him real bad. And it's a piece of graded zip and it's a red color hold, and it's normal sized dots, larger dots and much larger dots so they are coming at you.

JANSON: There's an interesting thing; I assume there's X amount of readers who buy the book and that follow the book regularly and I've been working very consciously on developing . . . for instance, the readers will know if I use a particular kind of zip, something is about to happen. Drama is coming up. It's an unconscious, sub-conscious clue for the reader; it's another way of manipulating the reader. Sometimes it's like leaving them clues.

RUBINSTEIN: It's interesting how comic books rely on old movie cliche stuff. But it works. I hadn't noticed that about *Daredevil*. I did something in an *Avengers Annual*, the one Don Newton did where Tony Stark finds out that the

computer was his mother and it's the shot where he takes off his helmet and goes, "Mommy, it's me." I mean, the computer had a screen with lines going across it so I had a lighting effect and I put lines going across in the same way to have a sort of mini-echo of what was going on.

Nobody ever notices that but you do it for your own sake.

JANSON: It works. You don't notice it consciously, but it does work.

COWAN: Other than Dick Giordano or Tom Palmer, what were your influences?

RUBINSTEIN: I got into comics thinking Neal Adams was the ultimate. Then again, I was young and naive . . . and wrong! And I had access to Neal's files. Actually, the advantage the three of us had, over the guys out there in Elephant Breath, Ohio who still want to get into comic books . . .

LAYTON: Is that near East Jesus?

RUBINSTEIN: Just south of East Jesus. We got to see the originals, we got to see how big they were, see the printings, the tools, the way people work. I had access to Neal's files and I started studying Stan Drake, Mort Drucker, and Leonard Starr and my inking started looking more like Neal's because I went back to his roots. I have since discovered what a tremendous . . . to call Stan Drake an inker is almost a put down. He draws so magnificently and it's such a cohesive unit. But you also look at other people. Now I'm looking at Brian Bolland's work on *Judge Dredd* which I think is very nice. I was looking at my stuff and saying, "It's too busy, how can I simplify it?" I'll go look at Al Williamson from 1963 and his Warren jobs where one stroke did a whole sleeve.

JANSON: Really, it's just Dick and Tom. I can't let Wally Wood go unmentioned.

LAYTON: Mine are real simple. Denys knows I don't sit down and consciously look at other people. Basically it's Dick and Woody. I can boil everything down to those two sources, in terms of influence.

RUBINSTEIN: When you're inking, do you use reference?

LAYTON: I used to do that, a lot. I've gotten away from that

JANSON: Constantly, constantly. My desk is a mess.

RUBINSTEIN: My job is done when my desk is clear of the mess.

JANSON: Exactly. I clear my desk before the next job but not before I finish the current one. I've used models on *Daredevil*, I've gone out and taken shots, I rip *Playboy* apart, for . . . this story I'm doing now with Black Widow . . .

LAYTON: The ones you don't put on the wall.

JANSON: . . . About Black Widow . . . Constantly, I'm using every conceivable thing.

RUBINSTEIN: With Black Widow, are you using a specific woman for her?

JANSON: Yeah, I have somebody in mind.

LAYTON: Funny because I did that with my Black Widow story. The one did for *Fanfare* . . .

JANSON: Funny if we chose the same one.

LAYTON: It's the two different versions. Mine's the old version.

JANSON: I'm doing Frank's version who is shorter.

RUBINSTEIN: In the *Wolverine* series, Frank is thinking about Clint Eastwood. He tells me Daredevil is Robert Redford. When I ink, even though the people are staring right at me, I have to have a real person in mind otherwise it's just a bunch of dismembered features. I have to have a character in mind . . . Anna Kapplebaum in *Captain America* was my mother. Kitty Pryde is the spitting image of my niece and what-have-you. That's another way reality plays into it.

LAYTON: I had Peter Cushing as Justin Hammer (in *Iron Man*) very blatantly.

JANSON: The best inking that I do, unqualified so as far as I'm concerned, is when there is no reference around and I see it in my head, actually see exactly what I want to draw down to the last detail . . . I think Joe does the same thing.

LAYTON: It's like with Herc, I don't have an image just what I created for the model sheet, I created a kind of look I wanted him to have, I gave him a look that matches his personality.

RUBINSTEIN: I did a job with Ice and snow and I remembered a Woody job, a mystery story about a guy who found some subterranians and got chilled and wound up like melting at the end of the story. I spent about a day looking through all my comic books, looking for that job and there was absolutely nothing in it I could use. I had such a sense of the terrain and the coldness that it was more memory than anything. [The story was reprinted in *DC Special Digest #24.*]

I look at Joe Kubert and the incredible sense of vibrato he brings to his inks, the guts, and Stan Drake's incredibly precise sense of drawing. I look at Klaus' stuff and the way it punches at you and if you could give me any one man's style to absolutely have, I wouldn't take it, because no one pleases me on all levels. While it occurs to me that while I don't do these things anywhere near as well as those I've mentioned, I am the culmination of all the things I like in other inkers.

CS: Why do comics artists like drawing women with large chests?

RUBINSTEIN: Wally Wood's women always had two invisible drawers holding up their breasts.

LAYTON: I don't think I do large breasts. Bethany Cabe wasn't what you would call heavy-breasted.

JANSON: Do you think, would you characterize your work as sensual?

LAYTON: No.

JANSON: I wouldn't either, you're right. (Laughter)

RUBINSTEIN: Who's sensual? Frazetta. Who else?

JANSON: I think Leonard Starr is sensual. I think Neal is sensual.

RUBINSTEIN: His women are mannequins.

JANSON: I'm not taking about just his women. I'm talking about the look, the feel, the textures.

RUBINSTEIN:. I don't find your work sensual at all because I see it as very clinical, intellectual. I read your thing in the *Daredevil Chronicles*: "When I ink an angry panel, I ink with an angry line." When I read it, I feel Bullseye was really shot in the head and it hurts. But I never got that sensual sense from your work.

COWAN: I get the exact opposite of what you said. I always get the feeling of passion, power. No matter what emotion you're trying to express with your inks. I never got the sense of a cold clinical approach.

JANSON: I'm glad you said that because I was almost going to take what Joe said seriously. (Laughter)

RUBINSTEIN: I look at your stuff and I see it as being very intellectual, design means to me a calculating, thinking process of how to juxtapose shapes and colors against each other for a maximum effect. I am not saying you fail with your effects, I just don't see it is lovingly or as spontaneous as, let's say, I was looking at a reprint EC black and white volume and Al Williamson's inks are very sketchy and rather crude but very pleasurable because he didn't bother polishing it up. I found more of a sense of flow to it.

JANSON: It's interesting that you see that because that's exactly what I'm not trying to do. I'm really very, my best stuff is very loose, very expressive, very passionate, very sensual.

RUBINSTEIN: Sensual is the one word I'm not getting from your stuff.

JANSON: I don't think it's cold. I don't. It's intellectual in the sense that I think about what I'm doing, but cold . . . cold to me is Terry's stuff. His stuff and my stuff are completely different.

RUBINSTEIN: If I have to think of somebody sensual, I see it a lot more in Dick Giordano than I do in your work.

JANSON: Dick can be sensual . . .

RUBINSTEIN: Yes. Maybe you're not getting it from my work, specifically with woman, I love pretty women and

This Month In

FANGORIA

Tobe Hooper On POLTERGEIST

Fear-film fans will be especially pleased to see our retrospective on *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, consisting of interviews with director Tobe Hooper and actor Edwin Neal. But every movie fan will want to read Hooper's account of the making of *Poltergeist* and of his relationship with Steven Spreiberg. This is Hooper's first major interview since the film's release — and it's a story as shock ng as anything you'll see on screen!

EVIL DEAD

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When he saw it at this year's Cannes Film Festival, Stephen King declared it "the most ferociously original horror movie of 1982." It's *Evil Dead*, the story of a small band of men and women caught up in a bloody battle against an army of demons in the hills of Tennessee. Detroit-based writer-director Sam Raimi, along with producer Robert Tapert and star Bruce Campbell, will bring you, behind the scenes of this low-budget extravaganza. Will Detroit be the next Pittsburgh?

And that's just the beginning! Director David Winters discusses the return of that *Maniac* team, Caroline Munro and Joe Spinnell in *The Last Horror Film*! John Hough, director of *Twins of Evil*, *Watcher in the Woods* and, his latest, *Incubus*, discusses his sojourn from Hammer to Disney to Demons! Craig Hannington, cult film director extraordinaire discusses his work in the horror field, including *Queen of Blood* and *What's the Matter with Helen?* We go behind the sets of a major New York musical production, as we examine the stage adaptation of the Roger Corman classic, *Little Shop of Horrors*! "Better dead than not well-read!" is our motto as we examine the best books in the field of horror film studies! Resident reviewer Dr. Cyclops takes a colorful look at the H.G. Lewis classic *Blood Feast*!

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I try to make them as pretty and erotic as I can.

COWAN: Strangely, when I draw . . . .

RUBINSTEIN: You draw very strangely.

COWAN: A lot of times, I'll switch, I'll go from angular, not stark, with lots of posing angles and such and that's always correct anatomy and I guess it's almost stark, yet, in the same panel I'll do something very soft.

JANSON: I wonder if the best work isn't contrasts . . . contrast of the harsh angles and the soft work. Do you like Terry Austin's stuff?

RUBINSTEIN: No. Sorry about that out there.

Well, to me, Craig Russell and Gil Kane to a degree, they're more after the beauty of the line and not what it's doing. It's when you put down a bunch of strokes for a guy's deltoids, you're trying to get the shadow of the deltoids. To me, they're looking for the stroke that's turning around the form and look how equally beautiful it is what it's trying to produce. So where I'm trying to make a reasonable facsimile of life, using certain shorthand passages, I get the feeling Craig, as gorgeous as his work is, is after a more decorative look.

By the way, to be honest about Terry Austin, I do not like Terry on the more realistic artists at all like Buscema or Colan, but he inked Howie Chaykin's Nick Fury story [*Marvel Premiere*] and I thought it was perfection. And I just saw the *X-Men*/*Teen Titans* team-up, not only is it great but it still looks like Walt's pencils. So if you pick two inkers and ask them to ink 180 degrees in the opposite direction, I think it would Terry and me.

You know, you [Janson] used to be my very favorite inker on Gil Kane. You kept the anatomy, you kept the shapes strong and all that. Craig Russell just did a job with Kane, where I don't know how he did it, but he inked it, line for line, deadweight, it still looks like Gil Kane, it's gorgeous, it's decorative, it's integrated, combinations of pencillers to inkers.

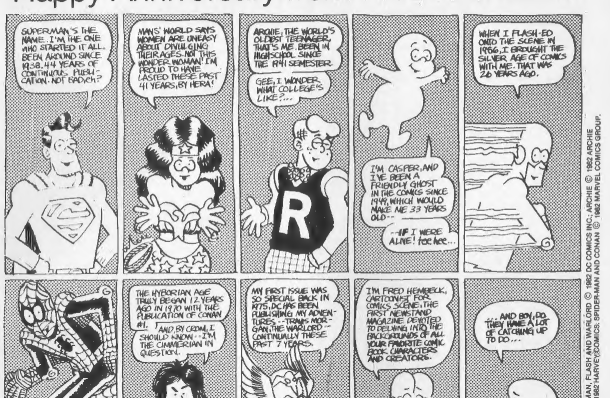
Do you think there is such a thing as pushing a penciller too far in the wrong direction?

JANSON: I think, technically, no. But what are you going to do? I think under a very strict definition, a bad ink job disregards the penciller. If, for instance, the pencils are very shitty, and the inker is really good, what are you going to do? You have to fix it up.

RUBINSTEIN: Should a mediocre penciller be given a good inker to raise the quality of the book? Should Tom Palmer be wasted on a new kid?

JANSON: I think we should put Tom on one very good book and one very badly pencilled book. That way everybody's happy. ■

Happy Anniversary from Fred Hembeck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ARGUE, THE WORLD'S OLDEST TEENAGER. THAT'S ME. BEEN IN HIGH SCHOOL SINCE THE 1941 SEMESTER!
SEE, I WONDER. WHAT COLLEGES LIKE?...
R
I'M CASPER, AND I'VE BEEN A FRIENDLY GHOST IN THE COMICS SINCE 1949, WHICH WOULD MAKE ME 39 YEARS OLD...
...IF I WERE ALIVE! TOO NEE...
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Ed. Notes

Gene Day was in the process of finishing his last project for Marvel Comics. Because of a difference of opinion, he was being forced out of the company. Before that happened, he was dead . . . of a heart attack . . . at the age of 31. The entire staff of COMICS SCENE mourns his passing, and so should all fans of comics.

When Gene came to loggerheads with Marvel editor-in-chief and creative supervisor Jim Shooter, he had already finished his best work for the company. *Master of Kung Fu* #118, written by Doug Moench and drawn by Gene Day, is a comics masterpiece. It is 38 pages of adult (that is, mature) writing and superb graphic illustration that blend to create the best comic that I've read in perhaps a decade.

More than that, *MoKF* #118 may be the most significant book from Marvel since *Fantastic Four* #1. That landmark book heralded the beginning of the Marvel Age. *MoFK* #118 signals the passing of same. Not because the book was good, but because it was excellent. (I'm not trying to be perverse, just trying to explain a bizarre set of circumstances.)

Here's Doug Moench and Gene Day—two of Marvel's brightest shining lights—combining their talents, almost mystically, (for the two men never met) to produce what may be one of the 10 best comics published since the end of the Golden Age.

And here's Jim Shooter who, as editor-in-chief and overseer of creative operations, holds the present and future of Marvel in his hands. And, seeking to fulfill his vision through the exercise of legitimate power, he lets Day and Moench go.

My first thought, somewhat irrationally, was that perhaps Shooter had not read *MoKF* #118. But the truth has to be even more bizarre. Either he read it and he didn't like it, or he read it and he didn't understand it. And if the person making the creative decisions over at Marvel did not think that that was one fine comic, and that the collaborative team deserved praise and more assignments, then the Marvel Age of magic is dead.

Don't misunderstand me. I think that Shooter is perfectly within his rights and is fulfilling his responsibilities by making moves to bring his vision for Marvel to fruition. What depresses me is the nature of that vision. The moves he's made over the past year and those planned for this year and next have left me and many other longtime comics enthusiasts shaking our heads.

It's been reported (here and elsewhere) that Shooter will remake the Marvel universe by killing off some characters and drastically changing a few others. Unfortunately, by the time he's finished, there won't be many readers left to care.

Howard Zimmerman
Editor-in-Chief

To Be Continued...

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Spider-Man has suddenly gotten interesting to read again according to many critics in the field. We wondered what all that meant so we dispatched Pat O'Neill to get the scoop from scripters Roger Stern, Bill Mantlo, J.M. DeMatteis and editor Tom DeFalco. As *Amazing Spider-Man* begins the trek towards issue 250 with a long plotline, we'll be bringing you the latest details, with lots of colorful art.

Trina Robbins has nearly completed her adaptation of Sax Rohmer's *Dope* and her book, *Women in Comics*, is due soon from Eclipse Enterprises. Bruce Sweeney managed to catch her for a revealing conversation about her work and her life. Just wait until you see the air brused self-portrait she sent us!

CEREBUS © 1982 DAVE SIM

Cerebus the Aardvark has been running for years and years and is considered one of the three trail-blazers of the direct sales market. With that in mind, Dave McDonnell sat down with Dave and Deni Sim to talk about the barbarious earthpig and how he has changed their lives.

Bil Keane has been entertaining newspaper readers for decades with his humorous look at life in the *Family Circus* strip. We present a candid portrait of the man and his work along with numerous pieces of art and memories galore. Also, his son **Glenn** is an animator for Walt Disney and we found out what it was like watching his life in the comic strips and what it is like drawing Mickey Mouse.

PLUS Marv Wolfman enters the Guest Spot with some interesting ideas . . . The Fandom feature on APAs finally turns up . . . Around the World stops in France for a look at *Valerian* . . . Hembeck is back with more gags . . . letters, news and much more!

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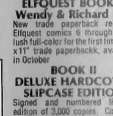

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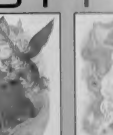

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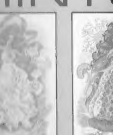

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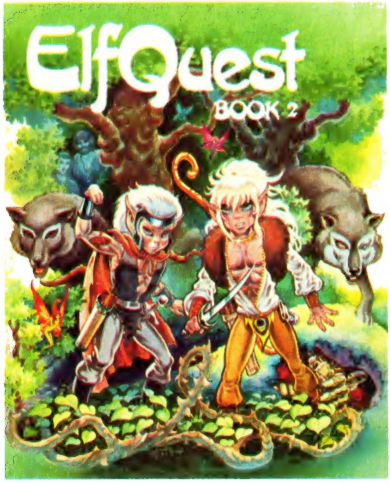

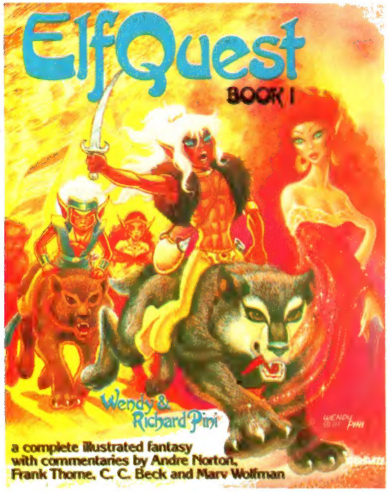
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